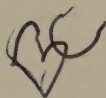


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Taylor of Down Under : the life-story
of an Australian evangelist, with an
account of the origin and growth of the

TAYLOR
OF 'DOWN UNDER'

R. F. Stone.



Crown Studios, Sydney.]

Yours in "Home" from L. Taylor

TAYLOR OF 'DOWN UNDER'

THE LIFE-STORY OF
AN AUSTRALIAN EVANGELIST

With an Account of the Origin and Growth of
The Sydney Central Methodist Mission

By
WILLIAM GEORGE TAYLOR
(Ex-President New South Wales Methodist Conference ; Founder
of the Sydney Central Mission).

With Portraits, Illustrations
and Introductory Notes

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To

TWO GOOD WOMEN

(One in Heaven, one on Earth)

MY MOTHER AND MY WIFE

*Whose quiet but ever-present and ever-precious
sympathy has furnished the inspiration
of my life*

BY WAY OF BEGINNING

By the votes of my brethren I had been placed in the chair of the New South Wales Conference. The insignia of office were placed in my hands by my predecessor—a distinguished minister of the Church—the Rev. J. E. Carruthers, D.D. Among the numerous newspaper articles that deigned to chronicle the fact was a certain Northern journal that paid a high and much-deserved tribute to the worth and work of the man I was to succeed. Then followed a reference to myself, succinct, all-comprising: ‘All that needs to be said of the new occupant of the Conferential Chair is that he is an evangelist.’

Even so; otherwise this book would never have been written. ‘An evangelist’—that, and nothing more, nothing less. In that fact I this day breathe the atmosphere of a perfect content.

Again and again I have been urged to this writing by men whose judgement it were folly to ignore. For long I hesitated, for have not better men written finer records, which have been published and—forgotten?

Full well do I realize that pages such as these lay one open to the charge of egotism. Still, in the spirit of a true sincerity, and in the fervent hope that they may prove of interest to ministers and Christian workers who are in the making, I have yielded thus to tell this story of the evangelism of my life.

At times the pen has dragged, for it has been difficult to submerge the personal element; at others my soul, and, I trust, my pen have taken fire, and I have revelled in the privilege of magnifying the grace of God seen in the extension of the kingdom of our Divine Redeemer. In fairness to myself it needs to be mentioned that in these records I have rigidly refrained from cultivating what is

known as 'literary style'; here will be found no 'local colouring,' no tricks of the rhetorician, but a *story* told in simple, unadorned English, the facts of which, it is hoped, will convey their own message to the heart of the gentle reader.

The major portion of the book was written prior to the declaration of the late European War; and it was hoped that it would have seen the light at least two years ago. War conditions, however, rendered postponement imperative.

With a timid heart, and yet with fervent prayer, I launch this frail barque upon the waters. May these pages at least prove to be a message of guidance and of inspiration to many who this day stand upon the threshold of their life's great work!

With a grateful heart I desire to express my indebtedness to my friend, the Rev. James Doran, of London, to Mr. Marshall Broomhall, M.A. (editorial secretary of the China Inland Mission), and to others for valuable assistance so cheerfully rendered in preparing these sheets for the press.

'KNAYTON,' LINDFIELD, SYDNEY

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BY THE LATE REV. GEORGE BROWN, D.D.

*(President General Conference of the Methodist
Church of Australasia, 1913-1917.)*

THERE have been two evangelists bearing the name of Taylor, each of whom has exercised a great influence upon the religious life of Australia. One of these was a visitor; the other was a resident in the Commonwealth. The two men represented widely different characters and modes of appeal and work; but they were both alike in their burning zeal for the salvation and uplifting of men, in their strong conviction that the only way for the accomplishment of these objects was by the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and its acceptance by their hearers, and they have both been honoured by the great success which they have achieved.

One of these men was a typical American, who had graduated in the streets and slums of San Francisco and among the rough characters who were engaged in the search for gold in those early days in California. He was known in after years as Bishop Taylor; but throughout these States the name by which he was best known, and by which he is very lovingly remembered, was 'California Taylor.' The success which followed his labours was of no ephemeral character, for in many homes the direct and indirect results which were so apparent when William Taylor preached the gospel throughout Australia are still manifest. Many other earnest preachers and evangelists have continued in the same great work. Some of the results of their devoted service we have seen and rejoiced over, but for the full record of their triumphs we have still to wait. In this also we only know in part. But the times change, and we also change with them—not in our

object, which is the salvation of men, and not in the means which we adopt for its achievement, for there is still for us 'no other name given among men whereby we can be saved' but the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, but in the widening out of our aspirations and purpose. Mr. Wesley told his preachers that they had nothing to do but to save souls, and in the sense in which he used the term he was right; but we scan a wider horizon to-day, and the Church is realizing as it has never done before that we only fully follow Christ when we take into our hearts all the mind of Christ, and care for the bodies as well as for the souls of men.

It is just here where the distinctive character of modern missions, as conducted by William G. Taylor and the Central Methodist Missions in all the States, is made apparent: no less concern for the saving of the souls of men, no new plan for their salvation, but a widening out of our object so as to include all that concerns the welfare of our fellow men in the work we do, because in so doing we find that we fulfil the will of God.

How far-reaching the work and aims of the Sydney Central Mission are may in part be gathered by reading the names of the different branches of work which are so effectively conducted. How many of our people realize that, in addition to the ordinary but all-important work of preaching and visitation, the Mission includes in its effective work such branches as Immigration and Employment Agency, Evangelists' Training Institute, Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest, Home of 'Sisters of the People,' Home for Fallen and Friendless Girls, Orphanage for Waifs and Strays, People's Central Hostel, Girls' Rest-rooms, Men's Shelter, Residential Home, Workmen's Home, 'Lyceum People's Own,' Young Men's Settlement, Young Men's and Young Women's Guilds of Service, Mothers' Meetings, Working Girls' Brigade, Sunday School, Adults' Bible-class, Literary and Debating Society, Musical Department, Social Clubs, &c.?

It is chiefly to tell our people something of this great work that Mr. Taylor has written this book. It does not and cannot tell all that should be known. He can tell us something of the successes which have been achieved, and we can thank God for them; but he does not and cannot tell

us of the times of discouragement and weariness which he often had to suffer, when the magnitude of the work compelled the old cry, ' Lord, who is sufficient for these things ? ' A strong faith gave the assurance of ultimate victory, but the strain to a man of his temperament must have often almost reached the breaking-point. We and all our Church are thankful that he has been privileged to live to see even more than the firstfruits of the remarkable harvest, the seed of which was so often sown in tears. The book he has written will, I am sure, be welcomed not only by our own people, but by all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who feel their responsibility for the carrying on of the work which He has given them to do. By a perusal of these pages they will be led to thank God and to take courage.

[*A pathetic interest attaches to the above note, inasmuch as it was almost the last this remarkable man was permitted to write, ere he was called to higher service.*]

BY THE REV. JAMES E. CARRUTHERS, D.D.

(*President of the Australasian Methodist General Conference ;
Editor of ' The Methodist.'*)

IF there is one feature by which, more than any other, the ministry of the Rev. W. G. Taylor in Australia has been characterized, it is that of evangelism. He has evidenced to his brethren the possession of abilities and gifts that would have given him prominence in not a few other directions. He might have excelled as a writer, with his crisp style and faculty for picturesque and striking expression. As a departmental minister he would have been a fortune to any Connexional office, with his masterly and almost unique gift of organization. As a circuit minister he would certainly have had the occupancy in succession of the best appointments that Australian Methodism has to give, with the variety of opportunity and the sense of popularity they afford. But he has deliberately eschewed all these lines of service that he might ' do the work of an evangelist ' in connexion with the Central Methodist Mission, of

which he was the founder, and of which, with brief intermissions, he was the superintendent for the long period of over a quarter of a century. Of that work he tells the story in these pages.

Whether or not the Sydney Central Methodist Mission was the first of its kind in Methodism, as is claimed by Mr. Taylor, it was at least among the very earliest of the goodly company of such organizations, and it was absolutely the pioneer of the Central Missions now established in all the capital centres of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand.

All these Missions are avowedly social, redemptive, and philanthropic in their scope and effort. But they are primarily and essentially evangelistic. This is especially the case with the Sydney Central Methodist Mission. Yet again: all the Australian organizations of that type bear the impress of their founder; notably is this so with the Sydney Mission, which for years has taken its colour and tone from the fervid and intense spirit of the honoured minister who laid its foundations and built up its superstructure to its present imposing proportions. The difference between 'Old York Street' as it was in 1884, with its handful of people, its dispirited membership, and its depleted exchequer, and the flourishing organization of the Central Methodist Mission of to-day, housed in the well-equipped 'Vickery Mission Settlement,' with its network of evangelistic and philanthropic agencies, all throbbing with life and purpose, marks the measure of success with which the Divine Master has been pleased to bless an agency which at the beginning of its history accepted as its guiding motto '*A Living Christ for a dying world.*'

The author of this book needs no word of formal introduction or commendation. He is one of the best-known figures in the public religious life of the Commonwealth of Australia, and in the Southern World generally. And he is not only one of the best known, he is also one of the most trusted and honoured. His praise is in all the churches, and his name is one to conjure with in all areas of Australian life. His visits to the Homeland and America have also familiarized large congregations there with his name and work. By his friends in all parts of the world the publication of his 'Life-story' will be welcomed as portraying one of the

most striking and successful ministerial careers of modern times.

It was William G. Taylor's privilege to exercise his ministry during an interesting and important era in Australian history. He has witnessed marvellous material growth ; he has seen wonderful political changes ; he was more than an onlooker in the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia and the resultant birth of Australian nationhood. During these stirring and eventful times he has been at close grips with the inner life of the largest and most influential city of the Southern World, and has combated the forces of materialism and sin which are the bane of city life to-day. But amid all he has been unwaveringly loyal to the supreme allegiance. He has believed in the applicability of the gospel message to modern times and conditions. He has never doubted the power of the evangel of Jesus Christ ; and right in the heart of a city throbbing with life, steeped in materialism, and, alas, saddened by much sin, he has adhered to the old Apostolic message, ' Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'

Who can wonder that such preaching and such work have been as salt in its antiseptic and healing influence ? By such means William G. Taylor and workers of like spirit and aim have rendered a service of incalculable value to these Australian States, already great and prosperous, and destined yet to play a part of vast importance in the great drama of modern civilization.

PART I

I

A STUDY IN ORIGINS

The charms of Cleveland—Great men born there—Ancestors and John Wesley—My mother—Village Methodism—Early Christian influences—A preacher a hundred and five years old.

I WAS born on January 18, 1845, in the quaint little village of Knayton, four miles from Thirsk. Backed by the Hamilton hills, surrounded by tree-clad knolls, verdant valleys, and running trout streams, it is as bonnie a little spot as can be found in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Two years ago I revisited the old home, and found it almost untouched by the finger of time—the same quiet, out-of-the-world spot it was seventy years ago. I preached to the few old folk who gathered for worship, one of whom remembered my father living in ‘the big house’ at the time of my birth. The house still stands, though the grounds have been shorn of their glory—five noble poplars that were wont to give dignity to the dear old homestead.

Knayton is one of the many outposts of the Thirsk Circuit, famous in the past for its wonderful contributions to Foreign Missions, and for the character of the men it sent into the ministry. It is situated at the southern limit of one of the finest rural districts to be found in Yorkshire. Who has not heard of the rich vales of Cleveland, surrounded on the south by the well-known range of the Cleveland hills, on the east by the North Sea, and on the north and west by branches of the River Tees? Eh, but it is a lovely spot to have lived in! I count it no small honour to have spent my boyish days amongst its sturdy, honest farmers,

within sight of Roseberry Topping and of the famous Captain Cook Monument ; to have been educated in one of its Grammar Schools, and saturated with the blessed revival influences that, in those days at least, were the joy and the boast of our Methodist folk.

I know of no rural district in England that has sent into the ministry of our Church a larger number of worthy messengers of the Cross (see Appendix). The world is a better place to-day to live in, and the Methodist Church is a long way the richer, for that galaxy of worthy—in some cases distinguished—men who here found the Pearl of great price, here received their divine commission, and hence have gone forth to every part of the world as ambassadors of the Cross.

If ever a man had cause to be grateful for his forbears and for the friends of his youth, that man is he who holds this pen.

I come of healthy Yorkshire stock. As far back as can be traced, on both sides of the family-tree, ours has been pure North Riding blood. On my mother's side I come of long generations of stalwart yeomen of the soil. One branch of the family has been in possession of that picturesque old building—the loved resort of the North Country archaeologists—Leak Hall, near to Knayton, as far back as the days of Charles I. It was here I spent my boyhood holidays, helping in the fields, feasting in that ancient kitchen, and wandering through those awe-inspiring wainscoted bedrooms.

My mother's father, Thomas Morton, was of Kilvington stock. Their farm was situated within a mile of Knayton. They were good Methodists, with only two children, a son and a daughter. My mother was educated at a boarding-school in Knaresborough. She was early brought under deep religious influences, and as naturally as the flower expands before the morning sun her heart opened to the transforming power of the grace of God. My grandmother must have been a saint. One of her letters, written in the early thirties, and addressed to my mother, lies before me. It is the letter of one who lived in the presence of the Lord, the production of a cultured mind, yearning for the highest good of her only daughter. It was from such stock my sainted mother came. During one of my visits to England

curiosity led me to the old Kilvington homestead, now in the possession of strangers. On mentioning my mother's name, the good farmer's wife said, 'Morton! Why, you'll find that name engraved on a window upstairs.' And, sure enough, on a tiny window-pane in a cosy little room, I found inscribed by a diamond ring the loved name 'Mary Ann Morton, 1828,' written in my dear mother's beautiful handwriting when only fifteen years of age. Here I stood as on holy ground. In this house my mother spent her girlish days. In all probability in this room she first trusted her Saviour. It was easy to imagine mother and child closeted in this spot in blessed and holy fellowship. In that room were generated forces whose uplifting influences follow me and her other children to this day.

I am thinking at this moment of the sayings of epoch-making men, telling of the influence their mothers have exerted over their lives. I can endorse them all. 'A kiss from my mother,' said West, 'made me a painter.' Sir T. Fowell Buxton, one of the champions of the West Indian slaves in the British House of Commons, once wrote to his mother: 'I constantly feel, especially in action and exertion for others, the effects of principles early implanted by you in my mind.' How noble the words of Lord Langdale, one of England's most brilliant Chief Justices: 'If the whole world were put into one scale, and my mother in the other, the world would kick the beam!' And better still is the boast of Abe Lincoln: 'All that I am, or hope to be, I owe it to my angel mother, blessings on her memory.' And certain it is that, but for the remarkable influences generated in that homely Kilvington home, I should have had a different tale to tell this day. It was my mother's example that, in my earliest days, threw a spell over me; her prayers follow me still. Her reproofs made me tremble; her patience and her self-abnegation won my heart.

I shall never forget one pathetic incident that marked an epoch in my strange young life. At a Sunday-evening service in the old Stokesley chapel, when I was about eleven, I was deeply impressed by a sermon preached by an old friend of our family. His homely appeal reached my young heart. I tarried to the prayer-meeting, and in my corner earnestly sought the Lord. After the service

closed I still retained my seat in real distress of soul. Passing towards the door with hat in hand, the preacher noticed my troubled look, and, putting his hand upon my head, said, 'William, my boy, what is the matter with you?' Amid my sobs I managed to let him know that I was in trouble about my soul. Instead of going with me in prayer to God as he should have done, the good man patted me on the shoulder and said, 'Go home, William, my lad. Be a good little boy, and it will be all right.' Well do I remember how my young heart rose in revolt. This was not the answer I needed, and, hastily leaving the chapel, I ran through the streets, sobbing as I ran. Reaching home, I burst open the door and rushed into the arms of my mother, and cried out, 'Oh, mother, I want to be a Christian!' There were visitors present, but what cared I for that? With her arms pressing me to her heart she told me of a Saviour's love, and comforted my tumult-tossed spirit.

It was ever thus; there seemed to be, somehow, a peculiar bond of sympathy between her spirit and mine. We knew each other. I still possess scores of her letters written to me in my youth. They are still my benediction. What love she lavished upon her children! How wise were always her counsels! How, in the many deep sorrows through which she was called to pass, she poured out her heart in giving to and in creating sympathy in others!

On my father's side I am a Methodist of at least the fourth generation, probably of the fifth. My father's birthplace was Skelton-in-Cleveland, then (before the discovery of ironstone) a lovely straggling village, two miles from the coast, at what is now the fashionable watering-place of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Skelton was several times visited by John Wesley. Although we have no record of his having preached in the village, yet on nine occasions he preached with remarkable results following in the adjoining market-town of Guisborough. On Sunday, July 8, 1759, Mr. Wesley writes of his first visit: 'From Stokesley' (where he had preached on the green in the morning) 'I rode to Guisborough, at the foot of the mountains. The sun would have been insupportable but that we had a strong wind full in our face for the greatest part of the day. At twelve we had a lovely

congregation in a meadow near the town, who drank in every word that was spoken as the thirsty earth the showers.' That same night he preached at Robin Hood's Bay, sixteen miles farther on, passing through Skelton *en route*. It was probably at this service that 'some of my forefathers (the Taylors and the Shemelds) first heard the great evangelist. At any rate, about that time several of them were converted. My great-grandfather, Thomas Shemelds, was born at Skelton in the year 1763, and his wife Elizabeth in the year 1761. Both were class-leaders, probably appointed by John Wesley himself. They lived blameless and earnest Christian lives, exerting a remarkable influence in the district. Of the family of five sons and two daughters, four were local preachers and one a class-leader. An original letter written by George, a son of one of the local preachers, and bearing date 'Stokesley, April 26, 1825,' lies before me. It is long, filling four pages of foolscap closely written, and is an answer to a letter written by his sister. Letter-writing in those days was evidently a luxury not often to be indulged in. Here we have a carefully elaborated statement of the great doctrine of personal regeneration. If he preached as he wrote, I am in doubt as to his acceptability. But there! people were different a hundred years ago; *they* were not out of patience with long sermons.

My grandfather, William Taylor, was born in Skelton in the year 1790, and was for some years a tower of strength to the rapidly growing Society. It was in his time that a long fight was commenced to secure a site upon which to erect a meeting-house. The squire of the parish was hostile to the Methodists, and every approach was repulsed. At length there came a preacher to the circuit who mixed a little of the wisdom of this world with his devout praying and earnest preaching, who determined that a chapel should be built. The Society was summoned to prayer. After much counsel and more pleading with God, the preacher resolved to beard the lion in his den. In a few hours he returned from the Castle with a smiling face. 'Thank God,' said he, 'we can set to work and build our chapel. The squire has agreed to give us the land we want.' In reply to astonished questionings, it transpired that at first the great man was as haughty as ever in his

refusal. 'No, no; I want none of you Methodists in my village. Why cannot you all be reasonable and attend the church?' The wily parson was aware that just at that time the old squire was anxious to secure a much-coveted position of authority in the county. The election was to take place at York. Hints were thrown out, at first distant and obscure, that certain Methodists at head quarters were men of influence. The bait took. At first the old fish nibbled, and ultimately withdrew all his opposition to the building of the chapel on the understanding that these 'men of influence' did not oppose his candidature.

At once the work was started. Even the squire helped in the quarrying of the stone and in drawing it to the site. Soon—I believe in the year 1814—the little stone chapel was opened. It was in that building that years afterwards I did much of my 'prentice' preaching. Shortly after this my grandfather removed to Stokesley, and in the forties he migrated south—a remarkable thing for a Taylor to do—and opened a business in Tranquil Vale, Blackheath, one of London's choicest suburbs. Here, assisted by a friend, he had the honour of introducing Methodism to the village. The two of them secured the first meeting-place, invited the first preachers, and my grandfather became the first class-leader of what has since become one of the most influential circuits in London Methodism. Right up to the time of his death on January 2, 1872, he was a trusted member and official of the church; whilst for many years his daughter, my Aunt Esther, was in charge of a large women's class, and was in other ways prominently associated with the work of that then rapidly growing cause.

Owing to business difficulties my parents removed from Knayton about the year 1847, and, after a short period in Huddersfield, went to London, in various parts of which vast city they struggled hard to make a living. It was here, in Old Kent Road, that my youngest brother, Thomas Shemelds, was born. All his life almost he has been a staunch Methodist, filling every office open to a layman, with the exception of that of local preacher. About the year 1861 my father founded the business in Hull that ere long was handed over to my brother, under

whose fostering care it has developed into an extensive business corporation. As Sheriff of Hull, and then for two years as its Mayor and chief magistrate, he has served his city well. A magnificent oil-painting of himself, presented by the citizens of the old city, now graces the walls of the City Hall and attests to the high esteem in which he was held. Probably the work which, of all others, has best paid him for years of service is that of the Sunday school. In conjunction with the Right Hon. T. R. Ferens, M.P., and Mr. W. H. Slack, my brother has for many years been superintendent of Brunswick Street schools, with a present membership of 2,200 children, one of the largest Methodist Sunday schools in England.

About the year 1854 I was received as a scholar into the old Spitalfields Sunday school. Formerly a Huguenot church for the use of refugee French people residing in London, it came ultimately into the hands of the Methodists, and in my time was a struggling cause worked as part of one of the East London circuits. I have a dim recollection of having been told that the great Dr. Jabez Bunting preached at one of the services my family attended. I understand that I was present at that service. The fact is mentioned merely as furnishing a link connecting one with a past generation. Two things connected with Spitalfields I distinctly remember. As a boy I was supposed to have possessed a fairly good voice. I presume that this got to be known to the choirmaster, who one Sunday morning lifted me over the high pew front behind which the Sunday school children were penned, and placed me in the choir seat at the front of the organ. I was a proud little chap that day, and have no doubt I made my sister and brothers green with envy as I strutted ahead of them on our way home to dinner. The more important fact, and one that will always stand forth amongst the recollections of those early days, is the deep spiritual impression made upon my young mind when a scholar in that school. It was the most peculiar school building I have been in. What a climb to reach it, situated as it was about the ceiling of the chapel among the timbers of the roof! In that strange spot there came to me thoughts of God, a knowledge of my sin, and a desire to be a

Christian. Although only nine years of age, I can distinctly remember the deep religious feeling that was mine as I listened to my teacher, Mr. G. J. Brown. After all these sixty years and more I treasure a little book he gave to me—a strange gift for a child of nine—*A Full Christ for Empty Sinners*, by the Rev. W. Romaine, A.M. On the first page I read, as the book lies before me, 'William Taylor, a small token of respect from his Teacher, G. J. Brown, June 11, 1854.'

Another of the distinct recollections of my childish days was the being taken by my father to a little chapel (of what denomination I know not) situated in a narrow street at the back of the London Hospital, to hear an old gentleman preach who was a hundred-and-five years of age. I remember how packed was the little place, and what holy ground it seemed to be to me. I can see the old saint still, as he stood in that pulpit, with long flowing white hair curling over his shoulders, and with uplifted hand and trembling voice pleading with the people to become reconciled to God. That which made a more lasting impression upon my mind even than the sermon was his placing his hand upon the head of my little sister Fanny, and saying, as he smiled with a smile that an angel might covet, 'God bless you, my dear little one.' Think of it—the hoary-headed saint of a hundred-and-five and the little lambkin of seven, both of them of the Lord's great fold!

II

CONVERSION, AND EVANGELISTIC BEGINNINGS

'Puffing Billy'—The grip of the Sunday school—A young prig—The great decision—Proofs of conversion—'Foundation Scholar'—Going into the world on four shillings a week—Spartan resolves—Morbid views of life—Safety in service—Remarkable answer to prayer—My first sermon—A big struggle—My first 'fruit,' and what followed.

WHEN I was about ten years of age our family returned to Yorkshire. What changes in the conveniences of travelling since those days! We left King's Cross Station early in the morning by 'the Parliamentary train,' the only penny-a-mile train of the day. We stopped at every village station between London and Thirsk, arriving there late at night. We sat on narrow wooden seats with cruelly straight backs, and had the smallest of windows to look out of. The couplings of the carriages were mere chains. Every time the train started woe betide the person who happened to be standing. By the way, my dear old father has often told me how, early in the thirties, he stood with my grandfather on a siding near to Yarm and saw old 'Puffing Billy'—George Stephenson's No. 1 Engine—come tearing past on one of its early trips from Darlington to Stockton, travelling at 'the terrific pace' of fourteen miles an hour.

My father took up his residence in the quiet town of Stokesley, right in the heart of the richest part of Cleveland. As it seems to me now, it was here my life really began. Our first home was a little cottage that opened on to the yard of Gentleman Farmer Braithwaite. Don't I remember how I used to be carried into the third heavens by being placed behind the farmer on his horse, that I might open the gates for him as he rode forth to inspect his farms. And when the time of harvest came round,

I question if a prouder boy could be found in all England as I mounted a famous old Shetland pony, the pet of the family, known to be nearly forty years old, and with great milk-cans hanging on either side, filled with, oh, such beefsteak-pies and apple dumplings and big junks of cake and tins of hot tea for the men's dinner in the harvest-field! I was as great a man as the Prime Minister of the British Isles could ever be as I sat down amongst those big perspiring fellows and hungrily ate my dinner.

The Braithwaites bulked largely in my young life. Mr. Phillip was superintendent of the Sunday school; was there ever such a school? In those days I was a tender-hearted, nervous little chap. Religion was to me the biggest and the best thing in the universe. How I used to hang on to the words of Phillip Braithwaite, to be sure! He dearly loved to talk to us about the judgments of God and the horrors of hell, to which place all naughty boys were sure to go. There was something uncanny in the way he made us tremble as he pictured the condition of the poor creatures who seemed to spend their eternity in crying out, 'Lost! Lost! Lost!'

A funny thing happened when I was about twelve years old. My shrill soprano voice had secured for me a seat in the choir. Proudly I took my place every Sunday at the front of the gallery, by the side of the old organ, which I believe years before my father had helped to build. One Sunday morning, by some fatal coincidence, neither the organist nor the leading singer turned up. The minister in the pulpit rose and announced the opening hymn, 'A charge to keep I have.' There was silence in the choir and consternation in the pews. The preacher looked round in surprise. Something possessed me, what I do not know, but up I jumped and started singing to the old tune of 'Sarah.' There was a sigh of relief here and there in the church as off we went into the old hymn. What really ought to have happened should have been a box on my ears, administered by some staid old member for my priggish act. Remember, I was only twelve years old. What really happened, however, was that old Mother Braithwaite clapped me on the back when we got home and presented me with a whole three-penny-bit, saying, 'Well done, Willie, my boy! Why,

you started "Sarah," and that's my favourite tune.' I believe her name was Sarah.

From what has been said it will be gathered that as a child I was the subject of deep religious impressions. Back of it all I put my mother's prayers, example, and sympathy. Naturally of a hyper-sensitive temperament, I was often impressed by sermons or prayers I heard. On one or two occasions I went forward to the penitent-form; still, I failed to get what I so earnestly sought for—why, I have never been able to understand. I was as simple as the simplest child, as honest as the daylight in my search for God, and yet my young heart was burdened, I had little happiness, and a sense of fear held me bound.

This was the atmosphere in which I lived until one night my brother John asked me to go to class-meeting with him. The class was held in the large vestry behind the chapel. It was a Tuesday night in the middle of the month of March, 1857. There were about forty members present. The leader was the estimable wife of the Rev. Joseph Sykes, a woman of great piety and much human wisdom. Little did I know as I entered that room that the crisis of my life had come. Our minister, the saintly Rev. Benjamin N. Haworth, was that night giving tickets to the members. The portrait of that good man still occupies a prominent place on my study wall. When I get to heaven one of my first inquiries will be for B. N. Haworth. Blessed be his memory! This holy man lived until the year 1879. In a highly eulogistic article that appeared after his death in the *Recorder* occur the following appropriate words: 'His gift and power in prayer was extraordinary. The very heavens seemed to drop down fatness while he was pleading with God. It was no wonder that he had such great success in winning souls.' When most present had spoken, the good man turned to me and said, 'Well, William, my boy, do you love Jesus?' My answer was tremulous, but decided: 'No, Mr. Haworth, but I want to.' I was but a child of twelve, the occasion was the quarterly visitation, and there were many of the leading Methodists of the town present. How natural it would have been for him to give me the usual advice and then pass on! But he was not a man of that order. Instantly the old man became excited, and, forgetting

all else, turned to the class with the words, 'Brethren, sisters, here's a young soul in trouble; let us pray for him.' In a moment the class-meeting became a veritable Bochim. Whilst one and another led in prayer, the holy man of God knelt by my side, and, with his arm around my neck, set to work to lead me to the Saviour. His whole message gathered around those famous words of the Lord, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' Listen to the dialogue that ensued:

'Who spoke these words?'

'Jesus.'

'Did He mean them?'

'Yes, of course He did.'

'Does Jesus live to-day?'

'Yes.'

'Has He changed in His disposition?'

'No, He is the same always.'

'Is He now uttering these words?'

'Yes, He is.'

'Does He mean them?'

'Oh, yes, He does.'

'Are you coming to Him?'

With tears running down my cheeks I cried out, 'Yes, I am.'

'Will He cast you out?'

'No, no, He cannot do that.'

'If He does not cast you out, *what does He do?*'

I thought a while and then burst out, '*Why, Mr. Haworth, He saves me!*' And He did. That was the moment of my conversion. Never shall I forget the joy with which the dear man turned to the praying people with the words, 'Friends, here's another soul won for God.' When I rose to my feet, my heart was at rest. There was no great gladness, simply a sense of relief and a resting upon the fact '*Jesus is mine.*' Can it be wondered at that I still love to preach from that golden text? I have used it in pointing very many penitents to Jesus, and am still in accord with my old college friend Hugh Price Hughes, who was wont to say, 'I rarely ever use any other passage of Scripture in dealing with anxious souls than John vi. 37. In that one sentence I find absolutely everything I need in the pointing of men to Christ.'

How full of happy childish service became those early days! The day after my decision a whisper went the round of the school, 'Billy Taylor's got converted.' The bully of the school determined to find out for himself whether it were so, and on our way homewards the cowardly fellow came behind and struck me with his bag of books, then stood back to watch the result; when, instead of rushing at him like a little tiger, as I should have done two days earlier, I stood calmly and without uttering a word, quietly looked him in the face. With a crestfallen stare, he turned to his friends and said, 'My word, and he *is* converted.' That first stand saved me from much after-trouble. The lads believed me genuine, and ceased to tease. Is it not thus all the world over? It is the limping, hesitant weakling who is worried to death by his old companions. Let a man but show himself true, and there is that even in fallen human nature which at once recognizes the guinea-stamp.

In 1857 I was received as a 'Foundation Scholar' in the ancient endowed Grammar School of Stokesley. Here I made fairly good progress, and should have done better but for the drink-loving tendencies of the master. Still, it was there I did my best bit of school work; but, alas, it was poor at best, and I have suffered through life in consequence. I was settling down to hard work, and was feeling the first upward tuggings of an ambitious spirit, when, alas, our family again removed, this time to the rising town of Middlesbrough. My father had visited as a lad the solitary farm-house situated on the site where this prosperous iron city now stands. Shortly after his marriage to my mother they took up their residence for a time amongst the pioneers of the then skeleton town, and had a good deal to do, together with Thomas Brentnall, Solomon Spencely, and others, in establishing Methodist ordinances in the neighbourhood, where to-day are two thriving circuits with five ministers and quite a number of noble church and school buildings.

On May 26, 1859, I entered the service of a firm of iron kings, Messrs. Gilkes Wilson, Pease & Co., as office-boy. I started at the princely salary of four shillings per week. At the end of a few months I had so commended myself to the powers that be as to secure—I write

it with awe—an increase of one shilling per week. After being sixteen months ‘on trial’ I was solemnly and formally apprenticed ‘to the art, trade, or business of an iron master, so far as the same relates to the said trade or business of an accountant.’ The awful indenture that thus bound me until I should be twenty-one lies before me at this moment, with its official stamp, and its signatures attested to by the reddest of red sealing-wax. Fortunately I did not read that dreadful document, and signed it in blind faith, otherwise I know not what would have happened! Listen, all ye who are privileged to live in these later days of light and liberty—listen to this one awesome paragraph:

‘And the said William George Taylor and John Taylor, his father, their heirs, executors, and administrators, covenant with [here occur the names in full of the members of the firm] that the said William George Taylor shall and will be true, just, and faithful to them, and every one of them, and the agent or agents of them; and their secrets keep, and their lawful commands everywhere and in everything obey; and shall do no damage to them or any of them, nor see it done by others, but to the best of his power prevent or forthwith give notice of the same; and he, the said apprentice, shall not embezzle, or waste, or lend the goods of the said masters unlawfully to any; and hurt to his said masters, or any of them, he shall not do, or cause or procure to be done; and he shall neither buy nor sell without his master’s leave; at cards, dice, or any other unlawful games, he shall not play; taverns, inns, or alehouses he shall not haunt or frequent, unless it be about his master’s business; nor from the service of his said masters day or night shall absent himself; but in all things as an honest and faithful apprentice shall and will demean and behave himself towards the said masters, and every one of them, as well in words as in deeds, during all the said term.’

That I was enabled faithfully to fulfil all these requirements to the satisfaction of the said firm is proved by the fact that these awful indentures are to-day in my possession. Let it be known, however, that the firm proved to be infinitely better than their ‘instrument.’ Save in the matter of wages, which, in the light of the emoluments

of more recent years, were utterly inadequate, I was well treated, and trusted, and faithfully taught 'in the art, trade, or business of an accountant,' for which I shall ever be thankful, inasmuch as it has proved to be of immense benefit to me during all the years of my ministry.

Shortly after I entered this office my people removed to Hull. Necessarily I was removed from a gentle mother's care, and was called to 'fend' for myself in the midst of circumstances of a very exacting character. I at once started a cash-book. That pathetic record is before me to-day. Eh, but didn't I know the purchasing power of a penny in those days? With melancholy interest I have just gone through those pages, in which, with rapid recurrence, I find such entries as the following: 'Collection one penny,' 'Class-money one penny,' 'Mendicant a halfpenny,' 'Apples a halfpenny,' 'Sweets one penny,' 'Reserve fund sixpence,' 'Subscription to missions threepence,' 'Pencil-case (quite a piece of extravagance) one shilling,' &c., &c.

How I thank God for those days of stress and strain! I make no secret of the fact that it was the surroundings of that Spartan life that largely made me. By it I was strengthened and broadened as I could never have been had my early days been spent in the lap of luxury.

But how I suffered for lack of education! To this day I wonder at the pluck which led me to resolve to become 'the arbiter of my own fortunes.' Colleges and schools, even night-schools, were denied me. Hence I resolved to take the matter into my own boyish hands. What others had done I at least could try to do. With a courage worthy of the ancient Spartans (pardon the egotism) I set to work and drew up the following document. I commit it to paper that it may help to give strength of purpose to young fellows in these days who may be similarly placed:

RULES FOR DISPOSAL OF MY TIME.

With deep regret I this day look over the past—so much precious time wasted, lost for ever. From this day onwards I desire to redeem every moment, and hence have drawn up the following rules, which I pray God, without whose aid our best efforts are sure to fail,

that I may be graciously helped to practise so far as may be possible :

- (1) I resolve to rise every morning precisely at 4 o'clock.
- (2) To spend from 4 to 5 o'clock daily in reading the Scriptures and in prayer.
- (3) On Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 5 to 6 arithmetic, from 6 to 7 Latin, from 7 to 8 theology.
- (4) On Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 5 to 6 English grammar, from 6 to 7 geography, from 7 to 8 theology.
- (5) Sunday mornings, from 5 to 8 theology.
- (6) As far as may be possible, to spend 30 minutes during dinner-hour with some good book.
- (7) To carry a New Testament in my pocket to be read in spare moments during the day.
- (8) To attend the Sunday and week-evening services and meetings as regularly as possible.
- (9) To retire to my room at 9 o'clock and spend half an hour in self-examination and prayer before going to my bed.

Middlesbrough, July, 1861.

As will be admitted, this was a bold and possibly a priggish endeavour. With frequent ebb and flow and some miserable failures, I did my best to live this Spartan life. At 8.30 in the morning I left home for the office, returning at 6.30 in the evening. At times I became so enamoured of these primitive studies that I was tempted to continue far on into the night, on one memorable occasion working the whole night through. I shiver still as I remember what I suffered in those cold, snowy winter mornings, when in my little bedroom, wrapped round with a blanket, and lighted by a single tallow candle, I jogged along through the weary hours with my books.

As has been mentioned, it was in Stokesley, when twelve and a half years old, that I experienced the joys of personal salvation. But not until we settled in the town of Middlesbrough did it really dawn upon me that I had been saved for a purpose, and that purpose to advertise my blessed Lord amongst the young people of my acquaintance. At first the thought came as a surprise ; soon it became a burden, and I fear me I began to

take morbid views of life. For one so young, I took my religion too seriously. It was not natural for a lad of fourteen to revel in such hymns as that of Charles Wesley : ' No room for mirth or trifling here.'

If some one had only taken me by the hand, I might in those days have been spared many a bitter hour of foolish introspection and of needless self-condemnation. Still, I was happy ; my religion made me so. My vision of Christ had been so real, my love for the Sabbath and for the sanctuary so great, that depression could not for long hold sway in the mind of a healthy lad. Quite early some old-fashioned Methodist introduced me to a number of Methodist biographies. How I revelled in the lives of William Bramwell, Hester Ann Rogers, John Smith, and David Stoner, and later on Joseph Entwisle, John Hunt, and Thomas Collins ! No book ever impressed me as did *The Memorials of David Stoner*. That book I still read. I became obsessed by its living pages, and studied it from every standpoint. When the cover of the book fell off through much usage, I had it re-bound. I have it still, and hold it as one of the most precious things in my library. Probably one of the greatest compliments that has ever been paid me came from an old Methodist saint in Hull, who had just listened to a sermon I had preached during one of the Richmond College vacations. ' My lad,' said he, utterly oblivious of the fact that David Stoner died years before I was born, ' did ye ever hear the great David Stoner preach ? ' ' Why do you ask ? ' I inquired. ' Why, you seem to preach just a bit like he used to preach. Aye, and you look like him as well.' For years those words possessed a peculiar power over me. ' Oh if I could but get to be something like David Stoner ! ' was my frequent thought,

On reaching Middlesbrough I had become a member of Thomas Brentnall's class. What a forcing-house of the church was that class-meeting—always largely attended and always a rich place of feeding for earnest souls ! Quite a number of young men have from that centre gone into Christian work in all parts of the world. One of my class-mates was Mrs. Cook, mother of Thomas and Vallance Cook. Here I learned to pray, and here for the first time I opened my mouth in testimony.

Sometimes even yet I view with wonder the manner in which, as a lad, the Lord was pleased to order my steps. Talk not to me about God's disregard of the ways of His children! His leading in my case was so definite, so constant, so full of evident purpose, as to render anything approaching doubt impossible. Several illustrative incidents stand out with distinctness that, to His praise, I would refer to in detail. Quite a number of youths about my own age professed conversion when I was about fourteen. We were wont to meet together for prayer. One whole day, on one occasion, we spent in the vestry of 'old Centenary.' What a time we had! And who may ever tell how far-reaching were the influences that resulted from such gatherings?

Easter Monday, 1859 or 1860, stands out with special prominence. I was strangely led to spend much of the day in the quiet of my little bedroom. I remember how I gave myself to reading, meditation, and prayer. In a manner that I shall never be able to explain, gradually there sprang up in my soul a hunger to see people converted. I must have been reading one of our much-prized Methodist biographies. For long I prayed—shall I say, struggled in prayer? Every incident in those hours seems as vivid to-day as if it all happened but yesterday. I was to attend the weekly prayer-meeting in the Centenary Chapel that night. Suddenly the thought possessed me to pray that we might witness conversions that night. That prayer-meeting was ordinarily attended by forty or fifty good Christian people, strictly conventional, and by no means on fire for immediate decisions. Such a thing as a conversion was an unheard-of possibility. Presumption or not, I prayed on and on for the salvation of souls that very night. About six o'clock a peculiar peace took possession of me, and the conviction came, 'Thy prayer is heard.' I rose from my knees at rest, and was certain that, in some way best known to Himself, that night would witness a manifestation of His saving power. At seven o'clock I started on my way to the meeting. As I approached the old market-place I saw two men—puddlers from the ironworks—standing smoking and talking together. A voice seemed to say to me, 'Go and invite those men to the prayer-meeting.' The

cross was to me, a sensitive lad, a heavy one, but I had no thought of shirking it. With a strange tremor in my voice I spoke with them. At first they laughed, and called it a big joke ; but there was a something in my voice and in the pleading look upon my face that ultimately influenced them. One said to the other, ' Suppose, Jim, we go just to please the youngster.' And go they did. I knew nothing of their antecedents, but this I do know, God met them in that prayer-meeting, and they went away rejoicing in God's converting grace. I commend this fact to some of our scientific friends who do not believe in answers to prayer. Coincidence? No, sir, it is not in that realm you must look for an explanation. *It was the work of God from beginning to end.*

In this manner was God preparing me for my life's work. When fourteen I gave my first public testimony. My little note-book gives the date as December 6, 1859. In those days every impressive incident was committed to memorandum-books, the whole of which have been preserved. As I read them in these far-off years, I wonder. What unwavering faith in God, what courage to witness for my Lord, what unconventional things I said and did ! I fancy I must have appeared to my friends in the light of a curiosity. And yet I was of so sensitive and shrinking a nature that I but wonder the more.

Would that it were possible in cold type to give some idea of all that Jesus Christ was to me in those early days ! I lived in the atmosphere of prayer. The spiritual was a real world to me, and I was fast developing into a mystic of the Brother Lawrence type. In that little bedroom I talked with God. In the weekly prayer-meetings I was often almost in an agony of desire to see the manifestation of God's power to save. There is, or was (for the place is now covered with villa residences), a certain field—well do I remember the exact spot—about a mile south from Middlesbrough, where, under a particular ash-tree, I witnessed Bethel after Bethel. One day—my note-book gives it as April 8, 1862—I was in sore trouble. Whilst at work in the office the low state of religion in the church troubled me. ' Why couldn't we have a revival? What was the matter? Was I doing my part to secure an outpouring of the Spirit of God?' On

leaving the office, instead of returning to my lodgings I went out to that field, and under that ash-tree poured out my soul in intercession. The place was silent; the night was cold and dark; in the distance was the hum of the ironworks. But I was alone with God. The details of that hour were committed to paper, and are now before me. I have done the same thing occasionally during all these years, but I question whether there has ever been an hour when I have been in such distress. For long the heavens seemed as brass, but at length liberty came, and I left that field assured that victory was coming.

When still a lad, local preachers and others spoke with me about coming on to the plan. For months I resisted their appeals. The pulpit was not for me. They became so persistent that at last I so far yielded as to agree to take the young men's service, held in the large vestry, on a Saturday night. The date was February 9, 1861, and I was only sixteen years of age. It was a wretched hour to me. I trembled from head to foot. My text was Jas. iv. 17, 'Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' I had written out my sermon, and have it still. Certainly it is a wonderful production, a curiosity in sermon-literature. Altogether it was a miserable effort. Standing behind a table, with my hands behind me, and a horror of fear possessing me, I struggled on for ten minutes, and then collapsed. If I could only have dropped through the floor! Eight months passed before I could be prevailed upon to try again. Behind the same table, and with the same congregation of young men, I tried to speak from 'Ye are the light of the world,' with but slightly better results. The thing was acting like a nightmare upon me. It came between me and my experience of God's presence. I shrank from the ordeal, and yet the thought would force itself upon me: '*What if I am called to this work?*' The suspense became so depressing that at length I determined to bring things to a head. On a memorable Saturday afternoon in the month of June, 1862, I made my way from the ironworks through the village of North Ormsby, past the old windmill—still standing—over a stile and down into a hayfield, whose haycocks afforded me the shelter I

sought. There, under that great heap of sweet-smelling hay, I fought out the battle of my life. 'Am I called to preach?' That was the question I must solve. On the one hand, I shuddered at the thought of going without being sent, and, on the other, dreaded the displeasure of God were I to be disobedient to His will. Never can I forget the sacred hours of that beautiful summer afternoon. I left that field strong in a conviction that has never once left me that I was called by the Holy Spirit to the work of a Christian preacher. A thousand times and more I have thanked God for the experience of that day. It has saved me from many a doubt, and has given a note of certainty to my message that could not otherwise have been possible. In one of my visits to England I sought out that sacred spot, but little changed through all these years, and with bared head I reverently gave thanks to Almighty God for all the wonderful things since then He had done for me.

A week or so afterwards I entered the pulpit for the first time, and preached to a mixed congregation. It was in the historic little village of Marton, the quaint little chapel—of which my father had been a trustee from the year 1843—standing within a stone's throw of the little cottage in which was born Captain Cook, the circumnavigator of the world. The date was Sunday, June 29, 1862, at six o'clock, and my text was the plaintive wail of our Lord, 'Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life.' I have no recollection of that service, other than that I felt I stood there charged with a mission to the few rustics who had gathered to hear 'the lad frae Middlesbrough.'

Three weeks later I received a remarkable confirmation of my call. The experiences of that day have meant so much to me throughout my whole ministry that I feel led to write of them in detail. On the Saturday night a knock came to the door of my lodgings, and I was called to speak with the most popular and the most eccentric local preacher on the plan, Lawyer Robert Gill, son-in-law of the famous Rev. Robert Newton, D.D. 'William,' said he, 'you have got to take my appointment at Lazenby to-morrow night. I cannot go myself, and you have got to face it.' It was in vain I made my excuses, and was

left in sore dismay upon that doorstep. All through the hours of Sunday I suffered purgatorial pains. I understood the story of Jonah as never before, and was sorely tempted to follow his example. To think that I was to stand in the place of this, to me, great man! However, much of the day was spent in prayer, and as I walked out those six miles through the fields I cried unto God for help. What followed I can never properly explain. God must have spoken through me, for that night a notable man of the district was converted. That morning he had quarrelled with his wife at Eston. Towards evening he left the village, as he said, 'never to return.' Nearing Lazenby he heard that the eccentric Middlesbrough lawyer was to preach in the Wesleyan chapel, and resolved to call in and hear him. 'Judge of my surprise,' he afterwards told us, 'when, instead of Robert Gill, I saw a mere lad in the pulpit, a lad with chubby red face and long black hair, dressed in a short jacket and a red tie. Annoyed, I was tempted to leave, when something the lad said arrested my attention. I soon found he was in dead earnest, and as he warned us of the consequences of rejecting Christ something laid hold of me. I felt miserable. My sins came before me, and I cried to God for mercy.' That night it was my joy to land my first fish. Ere he left the chapel he had found the Christ. Hurrying home to his lonely and worried wife, he told her what had happened, and ere they went to rest she too had found peace in Christ as her personal Saviour.

On my long trudge back to Middlesbrough that night I seemed to be walking on air. The answer had come, the 'signs following' had been given me. *And never once since that day have I doubted my call to the work of saving men.*

The next morning as I walked through the streets to my office a strange thing happened. It was about five minutes to nine o'clock. I had reached the front of the gasworks' office in Lower Commercial Street, when something compelled me to stop. Naturally the scene of the previous evening was uppermost in my mind. 'I felt like singing all the time.' And now, standing on that kerbstone, a spot that will always be sacred to me, I was led to take my cap from my head, and, lifting my eyes

upwards, I entered into a solemn compact with my Lord in some such words as these: 'Lord, if Thou wilt spare my life, I promise Thee that I will consecrate my whole being through all my days to the work of winning souls for Thee.' After fifty-four years I this day solemnly renew that covenant.

III

APPRENTICE WORK

Country local preachers—Star evangelists—Peter Mackenzie—
Eccentric preachers—An old barn—Licence to preach—
Amusing mistakes—The dogmatism of ignorance—A fearful
sermon—Street girls at the penitent-form—Breakfast-meetings
at the ironworks—On full plan—Early ingatherings.

THE local preachers of those Cleveland circuits have ever occupied a high place in the affections of the numerous congregations to whom they have ministered. Half a century ago there were some notable men amongst them—men more popular than were many of 'the travelling preachers.' I think of such as Butcher Parkes of Staithes, cultured Thomas Marley of Marske, Coverdale Smith, the winner of souls, and his spiritual father, Mr. Hutchinson of Redcar, of Thomas Bainbridge, a holy man of God, who influenced me much, and of many another whose very names have gone from me, but the influence of whose life and work still remains. Last, but not least, I think with reverence of my 'Uncle Tom of Skelton,' probably the most popular and most successful local preacher in Cleveland. In those days 'Thomas Taylor of Skelton' was a name to conjure with. He was on I do not know how many circuit plans, and was everywhere in request for anniversaries and missionary sermons. He was the last remaining Skelton Taylor of that family of whom on an earlier page I have written. For several years Uncle Tom was my pope. They tell me I am like him in appearance, whilst in voice the similarity used to lead to many comments. How often in those days was I taken by him to his distant appointments, and at the last moment pushed into the pulpit, to sink or swim, as his substitute! His words of advice at the end of such services have meant much to me throughout my preaching career. He was an old-fashioned Methodist, and caustic to a degree when dealing

with preachers who aimed not at conversions. The pulpit essayist was his abomination ; but the man of fire, though crude and badly furnished, always had in him a friend. His house was as the hub of the Methodist world to many of us. It was there I was wont to hear those good men dilate on texts and sermon-building. Most of them were smokers, and on a Sunday night, for hours after the service, with long clay pipes in their mouths, would those honest godly folk discuss the services of the day.

And great men from afar were wont to forgather in that old-fashioned house—stars from London or York or Hull, or, better still, evangelists needing a rest. On the occasion of one of my many visits the eccentric Isaac Marsden, the famous revivalist from Doncaster, and the still more famous Peter Mackenzie—a warm personal friend of my uncle's—were there together. What a day that was ! Towards evening Marsden went up into his room. Soon (for the window was open) his voice was heard in earnest prayer. He waxed warmer and warmer, until the villagers must have heard him from afar. For a time Peter Mackenzie sat in his corner. Gradually he became restless, and at last cried out to my uncle, ' Eh, Thomas man, I can't stand this any longer ; I mun be off.' And upstairs he went into an adjoining room, and soon was lost in agonizing prayer. Shall I ever forget it—that duet of prayer ? Out went their voices down the village street. What recked they what people might think ? They were at their Master's feet. It was by this kind of thing that in those days these men of God became so mighty as winners of souls.

What quaint men were those local preachers, and how deplorably ignorant were some of them ! If I dare, I could fill many a page with the idiosyncrasies of some of the men I knew in those my early preaching days. There was one, a gatekeeper on the railway at Marske, who used to recite his sermons aloud in his cabin, so that passers-by could hear him. And such sermons as they were ! I remember one hot summer afternoon hearing him preach at Skelton from those sweet words of our Lord in John xv. 7. And out of that simple theme the good man evolved at least twelve points of doctrine. It was like unto Tennyson's brook. The dear man was by no means particular about his personal appearance, and so frequently

gave offence to fastidious people. One Sunday morning ere starting off to preach, a parcel was put into his hands, labelled 'Pulpit Preparation.' With delighted anticipation he broke the string, and revealed a cake of soap and a comb. It was in this district also where lived a dear old saint of God, a survival of a race of men even then becoming rare, who had never been to school, and whose education was all of the heart. In one of the villages near to Skelton he one day preached from the text, 'Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an austere man.' But the dear soul unfortunately read it 'an oyster man,' and forthwith proceeded to preach a sermon on oysters.

I. All sinners are oysters.

II. The Gospel's the net to catch 'em wi'.

III. Salvation's the poke to put 'em in.

The cultured Thomas Marley was present, and heard the sermon and saw what followed. Going up to the old man at the close of the service, he quietly said, 'John, you've made an awful mistake to-night.'

'Have I, Thomas man, have I?'

'Yes, John. The Bible doesn't say anything about "oysters"; the word is "austere."'

'Eh, man, but that were a mistake, warn't it? But never mind. Glory be to God, we got two into the poke, didn't we?'

There were two young men, stonemasons by trade, who about this time came to reside in the village of Skelton. They were young men wholly consecrated to God, living the higher life, if ever man did in this world. They were both of them local preachers, and were much used of God. Naturally I was drawn to them. Our habits and aspirations corresponded in a remarkable manner. They had more to do in helping my soul-growth than any others in the neighbourhood. We met frequently for prayer and for honest dealing with one another's souls. One Sunday morning I shall never forget. Joined by one or two others, we went up the hills, and entered an old barn, where we spent the morning in pleading with God for ourselves, for the quickening of the Church, and for the coming of a widespread revival. That old barn was that day as the gate of heaven to us. I feel the influence of it still, and shall do to my dying day.

It was in the midst of influences such as these that I began my work as a local preacher. Can it be wondered at that I had to put my whole soul into it? The surrounding atmosphere was that of an intense and a sustained evangelism. Is it surprising that from the start the conviction was formed that preaching that did not secure an immediate verdict for Jesus Christ was a mere wasting of a great opportunity?

Towards the end of 1862, when seventeen years of age, the attention of the Rev. Samuel Tindall was directed to my boyish efforts. Mr. Tindall was remarkable for two things, nay, three. He was the tallest man in the Wesleyan ministry, he was the father of my old friend W. H. Tindall, of Southport Convention fame, and he was an excellent preacher. In a frame, together with the portrait of my spiritual father, my first class-ticket, and a list of my first 'Appointments,' that to-day occupies a prominent place on my study walls is the following certificate:

STOCKTON,

October 25, 1862.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This is to certify that Bro. W. G. Taylor, of Middlesbrough, is duly authorized to preach in the various places of worship connected with the Stockton Circuit.

SAML. TINDALL.

Supt. Minister.

A week afterwards I received from the Rev. James Allen, the minister in charge of our end of the circuit, the following:

NEWPORT ROAD, MIDDLESBROUGH,

November 1, 1862.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You will have the goodness to accompany Bro. Lofthouse to Port Clarence on Sunday, November 9; Bro. Bainbridge to Eston Junction on Sunday, November 16; Bro. Lacey to Marton on Sunday, December 21.

'The Lord bless you, and make you a blessing.'

Yours very truly,

JAS. ALLEN.

Thus credentialled, I started into the work with all the enthusiasm of a recruit, and, I fear me, all the assurance of a fledgling. Oh, the mistakes I made during that year 'on trial'! Coming home from that Marton service, Bro. Lacey, who had been appointed one of my hearers, said to me, 'Well, William, my lad, you did fairly well, but you know you made a very foolish mistake. You told us that Adam in the garden loved the Lord his God with all his heart, &c., *and his neighbour as himself.*' A little while after that I preached on a hot summer afternoon in the little chapel of Stainton to a congregation of six women, and would persist in addressing them as 'My dear brethren.' On another Sunday afternoon I was seated in the Skellon chapel awaiting the coming of Joshua Lee from Leeds, who was announced as the anniversary preacher. He was a famous man, and drew big congregations. Some accident detained him on the road, and the crowded chapel was left without a preacher. Willy-nilly I was pitchforked by my uncle into the pulpit. What I suffered through those preliminaries I do not know. When I came to the announcements I reached the climax, informing the people that next evening there was to be a tea-meeting, 'Tickets one shilling each, and *two for three-halfpence.*' The outburst of laughter from every part of the building completed my confusion. I suppose I preached to them, but the thought of that service has always acted the part of nightmare upon me. Fifty years afterwards I preached in the same place, and was reminded by an old lady of those cheap tea-meeting tickets.

On another occasion I was conducting a service in a farm kitchen at Old Ormsby. My head was up between the smoke-grimed joists of the ceiling, and a fire roared almost at my elbow. With all the confidence of ignorance, taking as my text Paul's words, 'Rejoice evermore,' I set to work to show that depression and worry and sorrow were sins of deepest dye. An old woman overtook me as I walked down the lane towards home. 'William, my lad,' said she, 'just listen to this,' and then she poured out a tale of personal and family trouble such as I had rarely heard, and concluded by asking, 'Well, my lad, just ye tell a body, can she rejoice evermore under such like circumstances?' I was dumb, and, strangely enough, I have never preached

from that text since that day. Well do I remember my right on the Christmas Day morning of that same year, when my Uncle Thomas said to me, 'I am planned to preach at Saltburn this afternoon. I want you to go with me and take the service.' Refuse I dare not. My uncle was my pope, and I must obey. In those days we had no chapel in Saltburn. The service was held in the waiting-room of the newly erected railway-station. That was one of the first, if not *the* first, Methodist services conducted in that rapidly growing new watering-place. Somehow I struggled through, and then was comforted by the corrections and the congratulations of the dear old man to whom I owe so much!

A number of those first sermons are still in my possession. Some are fearfully and wonderfully made. All of them are crude, and as dogmatic as they are crude. I knew—or thought I knew—a great deal more in those days than I do to-day. There was no doctrine I shirked, no subject I felt myself unequal to discuss. God and the devil, heaven and hell, salvation and retribution, were all so awfully real that I flamed out all I knew—or thought I knew—with a certitude that must have startled the good folk who came to hear me. Anyway, sincerity and singleness of aim could be read in every line. And after all it is that which wins—that, with a warm personal experience at the back of it. I still almost shudder as I think of one sermon I elaborated upon the text, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' However *did* I compose that sermon? To-day I believe in hell, in the distressing retribution awaiting the finally impenitent, but I could no more preach as I preached in that sermon than I could fly. The manuscript is before me—forty pages of carefully written matter, full of doctrinal statement, of denunciation, of appeal. *It took me one solid hour to preach that sermon.* I am amazed this day at my temerity and at the people's patience. What sort of a youth could I have been?

And, oh, how different the atmosphere of the congregation from what it is to-day! On October 9, 1864, I was invited to preach at Seaham Harbour, in the North of Durham. At night I preached this awful sermon. With all my soul—and remember I was only eighteen years of

age—I depicted the horrors of hell. One sailor present afterwards told a friend, 'I declare I could almost smell brimstone.' Bathed in perspiration I started the prayer-meeting. Scarcely a soul left the place, upstairs or down. Soon big men, one after another, came weeping up to the penitent-form. Shall I ever forget that sight? Ere we closed over twenty people, mostly sailors, professed conversion.

I must tell of just another scene I witnessed in those early days. A number of us, mostly youths, had formed ourselves into a Mission Band, for the purpose of conducting open-air and other services in neglected districts. Incidentally I may mention that I believe, as a member of that band, I preached the first or nearly the first sermon in that district now known as West End, with its splendid chapel and Sunday schools. One night it was my turn to take the service. The place chosen was the centre of a notorious district known as 'The Model Cottages.' The little room was full. My theme was Zechariah's 'Open fountain for sin and uncleanness.' Two poor street girls sat immediately in front of me. God blessed that message to those lost outcasts, and soon they fell on their knees and cried for mercy. We young folk knew not what to do. The situation was awkward. Fortunately a remarkable woman, a saint of God, was present, a daughter of the famous Dr. Robert Newton. She was peculiarly like her renowned father in voice and feature. Soon she was kneeling between those two girls, and with an arm around each told them of Jesus, the Lover of lost souls. Thank God, that night these poor wanderers found cleansing in the precious blood.

I confess that it is with wonder that I now remember some of the unconventional and unboylike efforts of those early days. Ere I had come on to the plan 'on trial' I started a series of early morning services in several of the ironworks of the town. Whilst the men were seated around on the machinery eating their breakfast, I and others would deliver to them short addresses. The first of these was on August 4, 1862, when I was seventeen years old, and my text was 'Brethren, the time is short.' I was my own precentor as well as preacher. For several years these meetings were continued in the workshops of the town.

Other local preachers helped, and I believe that lasting good resulted.

After being on trial for twelve months, on December 22, 1863, I passed the local preachers' examination conducted by the Rev. S. Tindall, and was placed on the full plan, taking my place among the thirty-five preachers then working the Stockton Circuit.

How wonderfully God was with me in the several years that followed! I have just been reading extracts from the diary in which I was wont to record my religious experiences. Every page reveals a fervent desire for the advance of the kingdom of God. Records are furnished of services in which the power of God was revealed, and there is everywhere expressed a yearning desire to be made worthy of my calling as a Christian. Those diaries this day humble me. If I had only proved, through these more than fifty years, faithful to those youthful aspirations and resolves, what a work I might have done!

Preaching now became the passion of my young life. My name was placed upon six circuit plans, viz., Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Stokesley, Guisborough, and Loftus. Every quarter I must have preached some twelve Sundays out of the thirteen. Several incidents of special interest come to my recollection. I was a proud lad when first I saw my name in print—on a placard announcing that on June 26, 1864, I was to preach 'a Sunday-school anniversary sermon in the Wesleyan chapel, New Linthorpe.' The other preacher was the friend of my youth. He was David; I was Jonathan. Side by side we passed our local preachers' examinations, and both looked forward to a life of usefulness. Alas, my friend fell from grace, and wandered far into the wilderness.

Another service I remember with devout gratitude. My youngest brother, Tom, of whom I have previously written, walked over to Ayton—'Canny Yatton,' as the local people called it. It was a lovely walk of some eight miles, and at the end we came to one of the sweetest little villages in all Yorkshire, nestling snugly at the foot of famous Roseberry Topping. It was the time of autumn (September 13, 1863). As I entered the tiny pepper-box pulpit of that little chapel a strange feeling took possession of me. My text that night was the one that six years previously had won my own heart

(John vi. 37). Tom, who was just fifteen years of age, was that night deeply impressed, and professed conversion. Naturally I was overjoyed, and with overflowing hearts we trudged back those eight miles to our little home.

I have often used the following fact as an illustration when addressing myself to new converts. Under a sermon I preached in the old Skelton chapel my uncle's eldest daughter was brought to a knowledge of sins forgiven. The next day she came to me with a peculiar look upon her face.

'What is the matter?' I inquired.

'Last night,' she answered, 'I went to my bed very happy in the consciousness of God's favour. But in the middle of the night I awoke in a fright. It seemed as if the devil were by my side laughing at me. "You foolish girl," he seemed to say, "what is all this talk about being converted? Last night, under the sermon of your cousin, you got excited. In the prayer-meeting you wept, and got more excited still. You answered your cousin's questions, and then came away saying you were converted. Silly girl! In what sense are you different from what you were before?" Oh, William, it was an awful time.'

'And what did you do?' I asked in much anxiety.

'Why, just this,' said the dear girl. 'I jumped out of bed and said, "Well, if I wasn't converted last night I will be now," and immediately I gained a great victory.'

My cousin is still living, and for all these years has been a happy and a consistent Christian.

About the same time I had another case of a similar character. In an after-meeting in the Wesley Chapel, Middlesbrough, I came across a lad kneeling in a corner of a pew, earnestly looking at a card. 'What are you doing?' I asked him. 'Why, look here,' he answered, 'some weeks ago I got converted, and went home and wrote the fact down on this card. Just now the devil came to me and laughed at the idea of my being converted, and I was just pointing him to this card and saying, "Look here, devil, there it is, in black and white, with date and everything. Pray, what do you make of that?"'

Another notable incident was the conversion of my only sister, Fanny. She was at that time a scholar in a boarding-school at Coatham, and on a week-end, never by me to be forgotten, she came to spend a day or two with us at Middles-

brough. On the Sunday night we sat side by side in Wesley Chapel gallery. The Rev. James Nance was the preacher. I remember but little of the service, for an uncontrollable yearning took possession of me that that night my sister might be brought to her Saviour. Throughout the service I was in prayer. She stayed with me to the after-meeting, and there, kneeling side by side, I had the untold joy of pointing her to Christ. Of her remarkable career, so sad, so brief, so triumphant, I shall have occasion to write later on.

Those were indeed happy days. I was troubled with but few doubts ; I rejoiced in a radiant experience of God's love, and with a singleness of aim that I thank God never wavered I preached throughout that beautiful district of Cleveland, and was permitted to witness many trophies won for my blessed Lord and Master.

IV

CALL TO WIDER SERVICE

A directing Providence—Formative influence—William Fern—James Nance—Charles Garrett—Anxiety about the divine call—Offer delayed for two years—Extracts from diary—Before the District Synod—July Committee—Accepted by Conference—Prized letters.

LET no one suggest that it is folly to believe in a 'Divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may.' What our fathers were wont to call the doctrine of a Special Providence is as clearly illustrated in the lives of men to-day as it was in the old Scripture times. My life would appear to me as an insoluble riddle were it not that I can so clearly trace the finger of God in every leading experience. As I review the facts of my conversion, my being led into the work of preaching, my call to the ministry, my appointment to Australia, my marriage, and my being led to begin the work of the Sydney Central Mission—in all these the handiwork of my blessed Lord can be distinctly seen. Unlike many whom I have met, who from the start have placed a goal before them, and have bent the energy of years to reach that one point, quite unconsciously Newman's thought must have possessed me, 'One step enough for me.' Again and again I have been called to follow in a darkness that might be felt. I suffered much in the process, for the one horror of my young life gathered around the fear lest I should get away from the divine leading. But to-day, in the calm eventide of life, I trace the finger of my Lord in 'every step on my onward way.'

Amongst the forces that, on the human side, helped to shape my early career, must be mentioned the names of three Methodist ministers: William Fern, the first to fire my imagination and to warm my heart—a man of ardent temperament and of single aim, whose passion in preaching captivated my young heart. James Nance, father of the

Rev. F. J. Nance, M.A., of the Victorian Conference, to this day stands before me as one of the greatest preachers I have ever heard. Somewhat stern and unflinching, his denunciations of sin made the stoutest heart to tremble. Men feared him, but they could not keep away when he preached ; and, as may be supposed, during his ministry in Middlesbrough, a great work of God broke out. He took a loving interest in my future, and made arrangements to propose me as a candidate for the ministry. It gives me joy to remember that under a sermon I preached at Wesley Chapel, when a lad, one of his sons came forward as a seeker and professed conversion.

But the man to whom I owe more than to all the others is my dear old personal friend and adviser—my ideal and my copy—Charles Garrett. Methodism has rarely produced his equal. I sat under him for three years during my frequent visits to my parents in Hull. I have never known a man who could move an audience as he could. Personally I used to sit at his feet as one entranced. His appeals thrilled me ; his sympathy won my young heart. He was a man of marked spiritual force, of intense human sympathy, and of great magnetic power. He won the people because he loved them. It mattered not what ‘big guns’ were brought from London for anniversary sermons, none of them could pack the great chapels as ‘our own Charles’ did. Unconsciously I made him my model. I followed him from place to place, and felt myself in the third heaven when I was called upon by him to pray or was permitted to help him in pointing penitents to Christ. And, oh, what crowds of penitents he had ! No matter where he preached, it was the same. I wonder shall we ever see his like again ?

It would be impossible on paper to describe the anxiety of mind I passed through for many weary months when it was suggested by first one, then another, that I should enter the ministry. I believe much of this was morbid, and sprang from the promptings of a highly sensitive mind. But the fact was there, and I had to face it. Days and days I spent in prayer, afraid to say ‘Yes,’ dreading to say ‘No,’ and so I stumbled into deeper depths of mental conflict. Uncle Thomas was my confidant. And, oh, how he strove to help me ! Never shall I forget one long talk we had together as we walked on the sands at Redcar. Still I got no

rest, until late one Sunday night, after I had preached at Skelton, I retired to my room in my uncle's house, and there fought out the battle to its finish. Long after everybody in the house was asleep I continued in prayer, until all at once a thought came to me, and with the thought perfect rest of mind, 'Lord, I will offer myself as a candidate, but only on the condition that if Thou seest I am making a mistake Thou wilt not let me pass.' It was a strange ending to a long and weary conflict, but it was the right one; and never once since then have I doubted my call to the Christian ministry.

But now a mysterious thing happened. I had interviewed my minister, Mr. Nance. Full of kindly sympathy, he arranged for me to preach a trial sermon prior to his submitting my name to the local Quarterly Meeting. Immediately subsequent to that service, when sitting in the old Centenary Chapel at the Sunday-evening service, a messenger brought word that the shop of a friend was on fire. Together we rushed out, and I spent the rest of that night helping to save his belongings. For hours I was wet to the skin. The night was cold, for the month was January. Next day I was in bed, and the next, and for seven long months I was so ill that I was unable to preach, and was ordered by the doctor to cease all office work. At the time the blow was a heavy one, for here seemed to be an end to all my aspirations. To-day, however, I can trace the hand of my heavenly Father in this wilderness experience. Up to this time my character was one-sided; it lacked balance. And although this illness delayed my entering the ministry for two years, yet I can now see that it was just the one thing that was needed to strengthen that which was weak, to make more real to me my union with the Man of Sorrows, and to fit me, on many lines, for the work that lay before me.

At this time I was in the habit of keeping a diary in which I daily recorded my religious experiences. An extract or two may prove of interest:

'January, 1866.—Another year gone! What memories crowd around me, what mercies received, what favours conferred, what blessings bestowed! And alas, in return, what unfaithfulness, what neglect of duty, what ingratitude to One who has been so good to me! Oh, may this

year be exactly what God wishes it to be! I take as my motto for the year, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

January 7.—A day long to be remembered. In the morning Mr. Nance preached from "Fellow helpers to the truth." In the afternoon I again renewed my covenant with God—a blessed and a solemn service. With God's help I will, from this day, seek to live only to His glory.

January 14 (Hull).—Heard the Rev. G. O. Bate this morning at Waltham Street. The power of the Lord was manifest. At night father, sister Fanny, and I went to Humber Street to hear the Rev. Charles Garrett, the most popular man in Hull. What a man! With what power he preaches! The people simply rush to hear him. His text to-night was, "Watchman, what of the night?" There were many penitents.

January 16.—Thank God, my father has again commenced to meet in class. For many years he was an earnest member of the church; but, like many another, he seemed to have lost his hold of spiritual things. I take this as another direct answer to prayer. For several years the burden of my cry has been, "Lord, save my dear ones." And, blessed be His name, already four out of the five profess to have found Christ, and I am certain the remaining one will follow.

January 17.—Went with father to a monster temperance tea-meeting in the Hull East Circuit. A glorious meeting; the hall and approaches crowded. At Mr. Garrett's request I opened the meeting with prayer. The speakers included Richard Tabraham, W. D. L. Slack, and Charles Garrett. Of course, Mr. Garrett was the star of the night. At one part of his speech the people were not satisfied with the clapping of hands, but shouted and waved their hats and handkerchiefs in the air.

Thursday, January 18.—This day I become a man—my twenty-first birthday. It behoves me seriously to ponder my position, my prospects, my privileges, my duties. Lord, help me to live up to Thy standard. The new school chapel erected near our home was this day dedicated to God. The Rev. James Grose preached in the afternoon, and Charles Garrett at night from Ps. xxvii. 8. In a remarkable manner God was with us. About twenty of the friends, including Mr. Garrett, took tea at our house—an

ideal birthday party. Later on in the day Mr. Garrett told us that news had come that day of the foundering in the Bay of Biscay of the *London* with the Rev. D. J. Draper on board.'

'*Sunday, 21.*—Heard Mr. Garrett this morning at Kingston from "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" I could not refrain from tears, my case was so exactly described. Heard the Rev. Featherstone Kellett in the afternoon, and the Rev. Dr. Waddy, of London, at night.'

'*Sunday, 28.*—Being requested by the friends, I preached in the new chapel, afternoon and evening. The Lord was in truth amongst us. Many were deeply affected, and seven souls professed to enter into liberty. Lord, preserve me from pride; I give all the glory to Thee.'

'*Sunday, February 4* (Skelton).—Walked down to Saltburn; preached twice with but little power, though, thank God, two young women entered into the liberty of personal salvation.'

'*Wednesday, 7.*—Have felt my soul much drawn out in prayer for the conversion of souls. Preached at "Centenary" (revival services are being held). Had a good service, but no visible fruit. Lord, help me to believe for souls!'

'*Sunday, 18.*—Great liberty this afternoon whilst speaking on the duty of prayer to the Eston Junction Methodists. Do not know that I have ever preached under such a blessed influence. Tears fell apace, and many gave vent to their feelings by frequently exclaiming, "Glory! Hallelujah!" At North Ormsby at night God again enabled me to speak with power. Several were awakened, and three or four professed to enter into liberty."

Towards the end of this seven months' enforced silence nature gradually reasserted herself, and ere long I was able again to take my appointments. Two years passed, during which I was called to work late at the office for month after month, and every Sunday was away preaching in one or other of the surrounding circuits. Mr. Nance had in the meanwhile removed to York, and the Rev. William Cattle, his successor, proposed me as a candidate at the March Quarterly Meeting in 1868. The District Meeting of that year was held in the fine old Brunswick Street Chapel, Stockton-on-Tees, the Rev. John Talbot, of Whitby, being

chairman. I was appointed to preach my trial sermon at seven in the morning of Tuesday, May 12, and had a walk of four miles before that service. Every inch of that road was covered with the pleadings of an anxious soul. I found a large congregation in the chapel, including some thirty ministers. My judges were the Rev. Samuel Taylor, George Wood, and William Barrowclough. Right in front of me sat the venerable and saintly Rev. James Rossell. Born in Wesley's time, he entered the ministry in 1813, and was much used of God and greatly beloved by the people throughout the whole fifty-eight years of his ministry. It is said that in face and figure he greatly resembled John Wesley, with his long white hair, and dressed in knee-breeches and buckled shoes. How that dear old man helped me that morning ! I took a strange text for such a service : ' I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.' By the mercy of God I was delivered from fear. A gracious influence filled the place.

Later on that same day, with four other candidates, I faced the ordeal of the oral examination. I remember very little about it, only that I had a fairly good time in giving my experience. Either a remarkable coincidence or an interposition of Divine Providence greatly helped me. The chairman, in conducting the examination, asked me, ' Have you read Mr. Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*?' ' Yes, sir,' was my answer. ' Do you remember his comment on ——?' mentioning a verse in Matthew. In a moment the passage flashed across my memory, and I gave the correct answer. The chairman said, ' Good ! I wonder whether you can further tell us what he says on ——,' and he mentioned a passage in one of Peter's Epistles. Strangely enough I experienced the same strange illumination, and gave at length the correct answer. To this day I cannot explain how this happened. Probably had he asked a third question I should have failed ignominiously. As it was, the brethren looked at one another in surprise, and nodded their heads in approval, giving me credit for far more knowledge than I possessed. Three out of the five were ' passed on': the Rev. J. R. Cleminson, now an honoured supernumerary in Hull ; and the Rev. W. H. Evans, who went, I think, to Canada after his three years at the Richmond College ; and myself.

Of my subsequent examination before the July Committee in London, I need say but little. Of those hundred-and-thirty candidates not a few have risen to high honour in the Church at home and abroad. I was fortunate in that I was appointed to preach my trial sermon before the Rev. W. O. Booth at his service in Deptford on Sunday night. When the examination was over, a slip of paper—still in my possession—was put into my hand: 'No. 74.—Recommended for Missions.' This recommendation was ratified by Conference, and I received word to proceed to Richmond College to prepare for work among the heathen.

Next to the warm and tender congratulations of my precious mother, I value those I received from the writers of the following letters:

The Rev. James Nance wrote from York after I had passed the Synod: 'I am glad that you have passed the District examination. The only advice I can give you is, Be yourself, be simple, aim at blessing men. Make no attempt to appear to be what you are not. Have strong faith in God, and pray much for guidance and power. Resolve that the decision of the Church shall be taken by you without bitterness and without disappointment; then all will be right. . . . I am glad that God makes you useful in saving men. *Live for this.* Keep close to Christ, and may God help and bless you.'

The Rev. J. Hugh Morgan, who had been Mr. Nance's colleague in Middlesbrough, and had greatly helped me, alike with his advice and his loving sympathy, wrote: 'Oft have I thought of writing to you. I am glad to know you have turned your face and heart once more towards the ministry, believing as I do that the Head of the Church designed you for that position. I hope you will so moderate your studies as not to tax unduly your health. To strain our nature in working is to curtail our powers of work. . . . To have you as a colleague would be to me a great pleasure. Any help within my power I shall be glad to render.'

My old class-leader, counsellor, and friend, Mr. Thomas Brentnall, wrote a letter I shall treasure to my dying day. I transcribe the following paragraph in the hope that it may help others as it has helped me: 'To have been enabled to contribute at all to the formation of your religious life and character is to me a source of great satisfaction.

I have aimed at this solely in all my intercourse with you, and if God has made us a mutual blessing to each other we must and will give Him all the glory. Your course, I trust and pray, will be bright and signally useful. Let me urge upon you to be instant in season, out of season. Your own piety take care of; deep let it be. Emulate Apostolic love to Christ, and their zeal for His glory. *Let Christ be your first model*; Paul next. Never forget for a moment you are going to be an ambassador of Christ. Aim at high and glorious deeds for Him. The names of noble examples are fresh to you. Be resolved to surpass them in toil and success.'

I cannot refrain from also quoting from a notable letter written by my dear old grandfather at Blackheath, then nearing his four-score of years. 'And so,' writes he, 'it appears the dear lad has passed through the fire unscathed. Truly you can to-day raise your stone of help. Now, my boy, endeavour to go on in the name of the Lord, with singleness of heart. Set your face as a flint. Be not afraid of the faces or the revilings of the worldlings. Nehemiah-like you have a work to do, and cannot come down to them. If a dispensation of the gospel is committed to you, receive it in like manner as did St. Paul, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Preach the truth, nothing but the truth—plain old-fashioned Methodist doctrine, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in eventful days, when the battle has to be fought between truth and error; therefore live to God and get ready.'

V

DAYS OF PREPARATION AND TESTING

Prejudice against theological training—Something is wrong—A hard struggle—The college atmosphere—Our tutors—Comrades in preparation—College prayer band—Hugh Price Hughes' mistake—Tract district bands—Vicarious faith—Holding on to God—Remarkable answers to prayer—Hugh Price Hughes' influence—Two stirring incidents—A fortunate sewing-meeting—Sudden call to service.

It may occasion surprise to know that I travelled to Richmond College on a bright September morning in 1868 influenced as much by fear as by hope. Please remember that I had been brought up in an atmosphere charged with prejudice. Those homely North-country Methodists had not yet taken kindly to this idea of college training. Over and over I had heard our theological institutions discussed by our local preachers, good men all of them, but many of them ignorant, and more of them prejudiced. 'I don't like these 'ere colleges; they tak t' fire out o' our lads,' one would say; whilst another would dilate on the folly of teaching Hebrew and philosophy and mathematics to men 'who, if they were called by t' Holy Ghost, had nowt to do but to save souls.' True, there were others like Thomas Brentnall and Thomas Marley who never ceased to thank God for this bigger outlook that had come to the ministry of our Church. Still, the discussions that used to take place in my Uncle Tom's sitting-room, thick for the nonce with tobacco-smoke, where a handful of village philosophers were wont to forgather for the purpose of 'putting things right that were wrong' in Church and State, had made an impression on my immature mind that it took long to remove.

Shall I run foul of the convictions of up-to-date Methodists when I state that after all these years I am still of the opinion that 'something is wrong' with our system of training? Young fellows come up to college at the most



Aged 12
(Time of Conversion)



Aged 18
(Local Preacher on Trial)



Aged 20
(Local Preacher)



Aged 23
(Student at Richmond)

EARLY PORTRAITS OF MR. TAYLOR.

impressionable period of their lives. They come to prepare for their life's work—as what? *Ambassadors of the crucified Jesus*. Everything is done to train the mind. That is as it should be. But more should be done to equip the soul. Unless a man's emotions, passions, soul, can be fired, he will, in spite of all his mental equipment, make but a sorry messenger of the Cross. In my time—and I fear the same thing still holds good—the training was too one-sided, too theoretical. Our church authorities are seeking to remedy this. And the sooner that remedy becomes universal the better. First and foremost, our men must be trained to become evangelists—aye, and red-hot evangelists at that. If we fail here, Methodism will gradually become a back number. Then we must give much greater prominence to training our men in actual practical work. Put the men down in the slums, compel them to face 'the man in the street.' Let not our college professors be afraid to call the men to half-nights of prayer, and go with them, carrying the gospel as the apostles did to the thousands who 'care for none of these things.' Put a premium on direct soul-saving work. Teach the men how to conduct an after-meeting. Above all things get the fire burning, and fan it until it becomes red-hot. The men who have no passion, no hunger for spiritual results, had better be sent home. A thousand times rather make better doctors or lawyers or farmers of them than mere academic parsons.

It is with mixed feelings I write of my own college days. Unfortunately I possess a wretched verbal memory. This has always been a powerful set-back. The classes were so many, the subjects of study so varied, the time at command so short, that the man with a defective memory had a poor chance. Still I honestly did my best, and came out of the institution mentally a better and a stronger man.

That, however, which proved my greatest boon was the atmosphere, the environment of the place. A word about the tutors—'professors' as they have since come to be designated. Daniel Sanderson was our 'house governor'—a good man, and strong. I loved him, and to-day I have none but grateful recollections of his many personal kindnesses to me.

George Osborn, D.D., was our 'theological tutor.' Everybody knows that Dr. Osborn was one of the giants of the Connexion. He played many parts, he filled many offices, and in most of them he was head and shoulders above his fellows.

William F. Moulton, M.A., was our classical tutor, and—well, we idolized him! I have never met his equal as a man, a master, a saint. I must put a severe restraint upon myself, or this pen of mine will run away with me. As instructor in the classics he was a king of men, as judge of our trial preaching he was fairness personified, as leader of our class-meeting he was a blessed inspiration to every man of us, whilst as a personal friend and adviser I never knew one like to him. It was just before our time that his son was born, the famous James Hope Moulton, M.A., D.Lit., D.D., D.C.L., &c., professor at Didsbury of New Testament languages and literature and philosophy. On hearing of the coming of the little stranger, some facetious student drew a cartoon of our beloved tutor, representing him, as soon as the nurse announced that the new arrival was a son, tearing down the Richmond Hill, hatless, breathless, with coat-tails flying behind him, rushing to Hiscock's book shop to purchase a brand-new Greek Testament for the use of the little prodigy. Marshall Hartley came that year as assistant tutor. What he is to-day he was then—a man of overflowing energy, courteous, patient, strong, bristling with ability, and quite the young man's friend.

Perhaps I should add a word of honest praise of the work of Heath Mills, our instructor in music, and of Professor Bell, whose lectures on voice culture have meant to me and to many others all through our life more than tongue can tell.

But what of the men themselves? Eh, but I am a proud man this day as I think of the companionships of those days! The majority were men of more than average strength, whilst a few won, even in those early days, considerable distinction because of their unusual ability. I think of James Cooling and Frederick Elton, gentlemen both, who have each realized the hopes we placed on them; John C. W. Gostick, the affable, courteous student; E. D. Dannatt, the manly fellow whom everybody liked;

Thomas R. Picot, that strange combination, whose work in the African mission-field has been of so remarkable a character ; George Weavind, the hero of the Transvaal ; my dear old friend, John T. F. Halligey, one of the best and the bravest men I have ever met ; E. J. Rodd, always at the head of his class, and my lifelong friend out in these southern lands ; the contingent of strong men who came out to New Zealand, and, strange to say, after all these years all of them, save one, still at work ; W. J. Williams, my personal chum ; F. W. Isitt, the urbane, the lovable friend of all ; John J. Lewis, the man who lived alone in the crowd, whose ability as a preacher and as a debater gave him a unique position ; George Bond, called to much sorrow and to high service ; and T. G. Carr, who one day nearly maimed me in the college football-field ; George G. Findlay, B.A., D.D., for many years one of the professors in the Headingley College, the timid, retiring man, destined from the start to achieve fame ; and, last but not least, Hugh Price Hughes, the college giant.

Can it be wondered at that, thrown into the midst of men of this order, my wits got sharpened, my outlook on life widened, and the tone of my religion became less introspective and more manly and buoyant ?

Anxious from the start lest these new surroundings should in any way damp what youthful zeal was mine as an evangelist, circumstances led to several kindred spirits meeting in my study daily for half an hour's prayer and fellowship. Our motives were misunderstood by some of the fellows, who nicknamed us ' The Holy Club ' and the like ; but soon that gave place to a better feeling when the little band got to be better known. Miss Hughes, in her biography of her illustrious father, thus refers to his attitude towards this little meeting of ours : ' The men who were keen on what was known as direct evangelical work did not find a sympathizer in my father. One of them organized bands for daily prayer and renewal of consecration with a view to inducing fervour in soul-saving, and could get scarcely any man of my father's year to fall in with his scheme. My father was not so much opposed to it as indifferent. For what he would term the " namby-pambyism " of such as lay claim to evangelical fervour he had no toleration and much crushing satire. Like

the unthinking world, he was too apt to regard the ardent evangelical as a sham without further inquiry.' It is cause for praise to God that from the day when Mr. Hughes had his new vision in the little study at Dover during his first year of circuit work, all this was altered. Mr. Hughes himself became one of the leading evangelists of the Methodist Church. Well do I remember his paying a visit to Richmond shortly after that Dover crisis, and, strangely enough, one of the first things he did was to gather a few of the students together *for a prayer-meeting* in his old quarters.

Another thing that conduced to the conserving of our spiritual life was the work we were expected to do in our 'tract districts.' Five or six men were appointed to each district, with one as 'bishop.' It was my good fortune to be appointed to the Hanworth Band. Every Friday we walked out those five miles, went the round of our district, and walked back—a good eleven miles between dinner and tea. But what talks we had as we journeyed, and what blessed times in the cottages and farmsteads we visited! In that work we had the joy of pointing several to Christ. Then came a special call from the Governor to three of us, whom he personally appointed as a 'Richmond Hill Band.' Unfortunately he fixed upon me as the 'bishop.' I never had a more trying work, or one that appealed less to me. We were expected to call at the big houses of the rich folk all around, show our cards, and in the drawing-rooms talk to the people about their souls. Alas, you cannot measure off this work by the yard. Our words were often 'out of season,' and we gradually realized how hopeless was our task. Out of this grew Mr. Moulton's desire for a week's special services in the college chapel, which he wished me to arrange. I have often since then wondered at my temerity in arguing with the great man. My position then was what it is to-day, that to arrange for revival services when the Church is cold and unprepared is to court failure. Mr. Moulton's idea was different. 'We need a revival to rouse the Church. When the Church is warm and spiritual you do not need special services.' You see, our view-points were different. His idea was the quickening of the Church; mine the saving of sinners. Probably

both were wrong, or was it that both were right? What a week of hard work, and what unsatisfactory results! True, we had a few conversions, but the trouble was that 'the Church' for the most part stayed at home.

About this same time two ladies, members of the College Chapel congregation, began a work of rescue and of education amongst the neglected boys of the old town. They sought the assistance of two or three of the students. In schoolrooms adjacent to the ancient parish church we set to work. The leading spirit of the movement was Miss Elmslie, destined later on, as the wife of that distinguished philanthropist Dr. Barnardo, to take a remarkable part in the establishment of child rescue work that to this day commands the admiration and the liberal support of the British Empire. In spite of the limitations of student life, we were able to render service, as Miss Elmslie's lieutenants, that made it comparatively easy to carry out the details of her programme. Personally I revelled in the work. The lads were uncouth and woefully ignorant, but responded eagerly to our efforts to instruct and entertain them—a very different order these from the members of another 'Boys' Club' of which I shall have occasion to write later on.

Never in my long career have I witnessed more signal proofs of the operations of the grace of God, working through feeble instrumentalities for His own glory, than during those college days. The desire for souls that came to me in those Middlesbrough days was still with me as I entered upon the work at Richmond. This I realized, rightly or wrongly, to be my best-treasured possession. Above everything else I dreaded lest the fire should wane. Hence was I driven to constant prayer. Samuel Chadwick, in his *Humanity and God*, has a remarkable sermon on 'Vicarious Faith.' That kind of faith I was now called upon to exercise. We never knew until Thursday or Friday where we were to preach on the Sunday. But I early formed the habit of beginning on Monday morning to pray that wherever I should preach on the Sunday I might see souls saved. As a spiritual education the habit was invaluable. Its influence is with me still. Oh, how often I wrestled in prayer, and in nearly every case before Sunday arrived had the conviction that

prayer was heard! To the glory of the God of all grace I wish to record that never once was my faith dishonoured.

Sometimes it was put to a severe strain. For example, one Saturday I was informed by the Governor that I was to preach at the Liverpool Road Chapel, Islington, on the following evening, for the Rev. Luke H. Wiseman, M.A., who had been called into the country. With fear and trembling I faced the ordeal. To add to my discomfiture, as I walked up the pulpit steps I overheard the loud whispers of two persons who had evidently come from far to hear the great preacher. 'Oh, bother it,' said one, 'it's only a student.' I put all I had, however, into that service, praying and preaching for immediate results. In the after-meeting I made a further appeal, but there was no response. Everything pointed to a failure. Still, I was enabled to hold on by naked faith. I pronounced the Benediction, strong in the conviction that my prayer had somehow been heard. And so I tarried till all had left. I was putting on my coat in the vestry and about to depart, when the chapel-keeper came in and said, 'Sir, outside the door is a man who wishes to see you.' The man was the answer to my prayer. In deep distress of soul he cried for help, and soon that little vestry was made to echo with our songs of victory.

Another, and even more remarkable, instance was that of Great Queen Street. The Rev. John Vine, the superintendent of this historic circuit, was taken ill. A supply was asked for late on Saturday. Happening to be without an appointment, I was sent. How great was the trial I cannot even now explain. I remember once, when, a very young local preacher, I was preaching at Redcar, I suffered purgatorial pains because I was informed that the Rev. John Farrar, D.D., Secretary of the Conference, would probably be in the congregation. And now, in addition to the responsibility of preaching in our largest London chapel, I was sorely worried by the thought that the venerable Thomas Jackson would be a hearer, foolish lad that I was. I have since learned that the greatest preachers are often the most sympathetic hearers. That day, with all its memories, will never fade from my mind. I got through the morning service,

prayers included, with a fair degree of comfort. I was the guest of my cousin, Thomas Simonson, who for many years was a Queen Street class-leader. All that day I continued in prayer that God would save souls at the evening service. I confess my faith was sorely tried. At this time the Great Queen Street people were living on their wonderful past history. The congregations for so large a building were small. My cousin informed me that such a thing as a conversion he had not known for eighteen years. The whole thing was respectable, cold, formal. I feared I had met my Waterloo ; still, all through the evening service I kept on inwardly praying for a manifestation of God's power to save. To the surprise of the people I called for a prayer-meeting. We had to go along a long passage, and into a schoolroom as cold as ice. The meeting had scarcely commenced, however, when a man uttered a strange cry, and fell to the floor as if in a fit. For nearly half an hour he continued apparently unconscious to all around him, when all at once he sprang to his feet and began with loud voice to praise the Lord for having saved him. Neither before nor since have I witnessed this same kind of thing. In every detail it struck me as on a line with similar manifestations so frequently chronicled in Mr. Wesley's Journal, and in connexion with the Irish revival of 1859.

To the glory of God I wish to mention that all through one long college session His saving grace was thus manifested. My sermon register reminds me of remarkable scenes that, by His grace, I was permitted to witness at Slough and at Kew Road, Richmond (where numbers were in distress, and five professed conversion); at Turnham Green, Hanworth, and Hammersmith (where a son of the Rev. Gervase Smith, D.D., found the Lord); at Staines and Feltham (the first conversions in the new chapel opened a fortnight previously); at Biggleswade (including a wicked man who had more than once attempted to murder his wife); at Nash Mills and Abingdon (where quite a number surrendered to Christ); at Hemel Hempstead and Studley Road (a great outpouring of God's saving grace); at Southmoor, Brighton, the College Chapel, Hampton, and St. Albans (where a dozen persons entered into the liberty of personal salvation). Who dare hint

to me, in face of such facts, that God is not the answerer of prayer?

By far the most remarkable student at Richmond during those years was Hugh Price Hughes. He was as eloquent a speaker in those early days as he was when President of the Conference. Those who have read his daughter's charming biography will remember how he was called to face the spiritual crisis of his life in the study of his lodgings in his first appointment—Dover. He was always a radical, and yet, strangely enough, with a strain of conservatism about him. Well do I remember how, when a number of us called a college meeting to start a temperance society amongst us, it was Mr. Hughes who sought to turn the whole thing into ridicule, terming those who joined the movement the 'Insane Society.' In the sixties ale was to be seen on the table at supper-time, and he was one who regularly drank it, as he had drunk it at home at his father's table. And yet within two years of his leaving Richmond he was to become one of the strongest temperance reformers of England.

Two stirring incidents occurred during my first year, in both of which Mr. Hughes was our hero. The story of each got into print with varying accuracy of detail. During the Conference of 1868 it was decided to make Richmond exclusively a missionary college. From the start every man in residence deplored the arrangement, cutting off as it did the Foreign from the Home men at a time when the companionships of a lifetime were being formed. Mr. Hughes was the only man who dared publicly to condemn the policy of the Conference, and he chose to do it when the Governor and all the tutors, with several leading ministers from London, were present at the annual Students' Missionary Meeting. The scene that took place during that speech will never be forgotten. Every man of us cheered the speaker to the echo, and a scene of intensest enthusiasm was witnessed throughout that packed audience. At its close I walked down the students' walk with dear old Dr. Osborn. He never once spoke, but all the way was sighing as if the end of everything had come. Towards the close of supper, to the amazement of everybody, the venerable Doctor entered the dining-hall, and took his seat by the side of the Governor. We expected to

see the dust fly, and were not disappointed. The Doctor rose, and in deep and solemn tones deplored the scene he had witnessed in the chapel. He expressed the hope that 'the young man had spoken inadvertently,' &c. The good old man evidently saw ahead another 'forty-nine' agitation, and he must needs nip it in the bud. He concluded by demanding from the transgressor a public apology before his brethren. When Mr. Hughes rose a deathly silence held us spellbound. In quiet dignity, and in the fewest words, he made an apology the exact counterpart of Garrick's famous *amende honorable*: 'I said you were a fool, it is true, and I am sorry for it.'

The matter, however, did not end there, for at the Synod of which Dr. Osborn was chairman, and of which Mr. Hughes, as a fourth year's man, was a member, a charge was made against him, and it was proposed that he should lose a year's status. The vote was about to be put when some one suggested that, in all fairness, the young man should be allowed to make an explanation. Quietly Mr. Hughes rose amongst his elders, and had not spoken many minutes before the old men of the Synod were cheering him. 'Stop!' cried the perturbed chairman. 'You are cheering a sinner.' 'True, Mr. Chairman,' called out Dr. Gervase Smith, 'but he is a pardoned sinner.' And so it proved to be. By an overwhelming majority Mr. Hughes got his year. It is a significant fact that within the next three or four years the policy of the 1868 Conference was changed to that which at present obtains, to the decided advantage alike of the Home and Foreign Missionary students.

The other incident was of a more serious character, involving as it did every man in the college—a veritable tempest in a teapot, with plenty of hot water about during the twelve hours it lasted. The trouble arose over an article that appeared in a manuscript journal called *The Anchorite*, that for years had been maintained by the students, and was their own property. The Governor happened upon the volume in which that article appeared—a satirical account of a visit of one of the students to 'a poor appointment.' He took possession, and demanded that the rest—some dozen volumes—should be handed over to him. The librarian, after consultation with the

men, declined to part with them. What a tempest burst forth, to be sure! Within half an hour the whole lot of us were suspended. 'Bradshaw' was in demand everywhere, as we expected to have to leave for home the next day. College meetings of the men, and tutors' meetings of the staff, alternated throughout that memorable day. Mr. Moulton ultimately saved the situation, and the crisis ended in a compromise. We agreed to surrender the books on condition that the tutors acknowledged that they were our property, and that we could have access to them in the Governor's study at our pleasure. At eleven o'clock that night the tutorial staff and the men met. At a signal from one of the men the offending books were placed on the table, and Mr. Hughes, in a never-to-be-forgotten impromptu speech that would have done credit to a Prime Minister, a speech full of feeling, sprinkled with humour, respect, and just a little of satire, handed over the books to be placed on the shelves of the Governor's study, where I expect they lie buried to this day. The scene ended by our 'kissing all round' and by earnest and feeling prayer by Mr. Moulton.

I had not been at Richmond for many weeks when one day Mr. Hartley requested me to go down into the town and read to the church ladies gathered at a sewing-meeting. I found afterwards that it was my aunt's friend, Mrs. Moulton, who had mentioned my name. She little knew what a good turn she had thus rendered me, for it was at that gathering I first met 'the best woman in the world'—the wife of my youth, the mother of my children, my companion and comrade for over forty years. Gradually, like two halves of a hemisphere, we were drawn together, and at the earliest possible day were made one. But more of this anon.

We had just commenced our third year's work when our dovecote was stirred by the announcement, 'A man needed immediately for Calcutta.' The tutors sent up three names to the Committee in London: 'Rodd, Rae, Taylor.' Mr. Rodd was fixed upon, and all arrangements made, when a hitch occurred, and Mr. Rae was sent. My name next appeared in connexion with an emergency call for South Africa. The appointment was almost finalized, when an esteemed minister in the English ranks

fell ill. The doctors recommended Africa, and he was sent in my place. A few days later the Governor sent for me into his study. 'Mr. Taylor, we want two men for Australia. We have suggested your name and that of Mr. Rodd. You know that this will carry with it severance from the British Conference, with no right of return. Are you willing to face it?' Had he mentioned Greenland, I question if I should have demurred. My offer to the Conference had been 'general,' and that meant, to me, any place on the face of the globe. At once the answer came, 'I am willing to go anywhere the Committee sends me, but should like in this case to consult my parents.' In a day or two the answer I anticipated arrived, and at once I was put down for Brisbane.

Thus unexpectedly my college days were brought to an end. In every respect, physically, mentally, spiritually, I left Richmond a stronger man. Friendships were formed that have been a priceless heritage to me all through these years. I had done 'respectable' work in my classes, had met the woman of my choice, had mastered a broader, healthier view of life, and had received many tokens of the divine approval in the spiritual children He had given me. And so I left the dear old College to enter upon my real life's work.

VI

A MYSTERIOUS PROVIDENCE

A heavy cloud—An only sister—A sensitive, vivacious follower of the Christ—An accident—A living martyrdom—Loss of sight, of speech, and of hearing—A unique gift—*A la Bella* Cook—Consecrated fingers—Wonderful garden leaves—A much-prized letter.

DURING the entire period of my college life a thick cloud had rested upon our home in Hull. My only sister, the comrade of my boyish days, lay in the grip of a mysterious disease that baffled the best medical skill, and that carried with it experiences of so remarkable a character as to warrant my turning aside from this personal story that I may furnish outline facts of what, at the time, created the keenest interest beyond the confines of our own county, and that had much to do in giving tone and colour to my after-life.

My sister Fanny, two years my junior, though highly strung, and of a peculiarly sensitive temperament, was a vivacious and withal a brainy lassie. The first letter she ever wrote, after we returned to Yorkshire from London, lies before me. Although but nine years of age, she was able thus to express herself :

‘ I don’t like this place (Stokesley) very well. We see none of the fine sights you have in London. There are two or three old bells now making a tinkling noise like that which one is able to make with the poker and tongs. I am reminded that to-day we commemorate that memorable event, Gunpowder Plot, of which I have been reading at school this morning, and of that wicked man, Guy Fawkes, of whom you know. He sought to carry out his project in the reign of James the First,’ &c., &c.

It was on January 15, 1865, when she was eighteen years of age, that, as already mentioned, it was my joy to point my sister to Christ. Never for a moment did

she falter in her confession of her faith. Always bright, she was now at times radiant with a gladness of soul that simply had to make itself felt. I have in my possession a letter that I shall treasure to my dying day. Bearing date January 16, 1867, she speaks of her two years' experience of the love of her Saviour. 'I can say,' she writes, 'that God is my Father, and because of that these two years have been the happiest of my life. May God give me more of His grace! May I realize more of His love, and may I be more watchful and prayerful!'

Within a few days of the writing of that letter the tragedy of her life occurred. The Rev. Benjamin Gregory, D.D., was advertised to preach a special sermon in Hull. Fanny and the maid 'kept house' whilst the family went to hear the great divine. Whilst the girls were innocently romping my poor sister was accidentally struck on the head, and from that trifling accident ensued three years of acutest suffering, borne from start to finish with the fortitude of a saint of God. She was attacked by neuralgia of a virulent type. Doctors were baffled, and all at home were at their wits' end to know in what way they could assuage the agony of the sufferer. Ere long the dear girl took to her bed, where she lay for three never-to-be-forgotten years; not one moment free from pain, at times of an excruciating character. Frequent and painful fits supervened, each one worse than that which preceded it. Within twelve months her eyesight left her. Blind, and every moment in pain, never a murmur passed her lips. Blessed by nature with a keen sense of humour, she would make fun out of the tears of her loved ones. A few months later she lost her sense of speech, and then—as an awful climax—a few months later still her sense of hearing. Think of it—suffering pain that at times was indescribable, unable to see, to speak, or to hear, and yet the most cheerful one in the house! Forty-six years have passed since she was called home. I have travelled three times round the world, but never have I anywhere witnessed a more beautiful illustration of grace triumphing over the greatest difficulties.

And now comes the mysterious part of my story. No sooner had the dear girl lost the third sense—that of hearing—than it was observed that the tips of her fingers

underwent a peculiar change, becoming enlarged and sensitive to a remarkable degree. Up to this time our only method of communication was by means of the mute alphabet on her own fingers. One day my mother was, by this tedious process, reading a letter that I had written to her from Richmond. A few moments later the dear girl picked it up, and was noticed to pass her fingers over the smooth surface. A look of wonder came over her face, giving place to one of incredulity. Then suddenly, throwing the letter on to the counterpane, she clapped her hands and manifested the greatest excitement. Feeling for her slate, she rapidly wrote, 'Mother, mother, I can read William's letter with my fingers.' And it was even so. At first we were amazed. Mother's first thought was that it was a miracle. The doctor was summoned, and he laughed at the, to him, impossible thing. Throwing an envelope on to the bed, he said, 'Now let us see if she can read that.' The dear girl passed her fingers over the address again and again, evidently puzzled at something. Then taking her slate she wrote, 'They have made a mistake; they call the doctor "chemist" instead of "surgeon."' The doctor picked up the envelope, and noticed for the first time that his correspondent had addressed him as 'Dr. ———, Chemist, Hull.' 'Well,' said the doctor to my mother, 'after this I can never doubt anything again.' In this marvellous manner the divine law of compensation was demonstrated, and another opening was granted her to the world beyond herself.

As may be supposed, the case created an interest that spread far and wide. Specialists from distant parts of the country came to investigate. Frequent mention of her case was made from the pulpits of Hull, furnishing as it did illustrations of the wonder-working power of the grace of God. Everybody was puzzled. All kinds of theories were advanced. No doctor who visited her had heard of a similar case. Strangely enough, a short while afterwards the English newspapers told of another case like unto it—that of a soldier in the Franco-Prussian War, at that time raging, whose head had been struck by a splinter from a cannon-ball. In the interest of medical science, my father and mother agreed to an

examination after death, when it was discovered that as the result of the blow three years before the skull had gradually thickened and grown into the brain. Thus everything was explained.

The best part of my story remains to be told. A few years ago I sat in the room of that wonderful saint of God, Bella Cook, who in the city of New York had been confined to her bed for over fifty years. Never was I nearer heaven than during those blessed hours. My sister's room was a near approach to that of Bella Cook. What an illustration of patient, cheerful resignation, what a ministry of sympathy and of mercy was hers! Experienced Christians, ministers and laymen, from far came to witness what the grace of God could do, and they went away enriched by all they saw.

When the fact came home to her that the third sense—that of hearing—had suddenly left her, she was noticed to be perturbed, the tears running down her face. Before long, however, she brushed the tears from her cheeks, and taking her slate wrote, 'Forgive me, mother; it is wrong of me to fret. I cannot see you, or talk to you, or hear your voice, *but, thank God, I have got my fingers left.*' And right nobly she employed those fingers 'in the King's business.' Amongst my few priceless treasures I still possess an envelope addressed as follows, and written just two months before her death: 'For my dear father and mother, written when I could not see, speak, or hear.—FANNY TAYLOR.' What do I find within the envelope? Four pages covered with a precious message, written in a firm hand, in places carefully underlined. How it could be done is still a wonder to me. It contains the whole of Charlotte's Elliott's well-known hymn, one verse of which so exactly described her experience:

Though dark my path and sad my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not,
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
Thy will be done.

This is followed by a stanza from Dr. Horatius Bonar's hymn of trust:

Thy way, not mine, O Lord
However dark it be.

Then follow scriptural texts and words of faith and hope that at this distant time are still preaching to me their message of trust and of hope.

In her desire to influence others to seek her Lord, she conceived the beautiful idea of cutting out pieces of green paper to represent leaves that were brought to her from the garden. Upon these she would write either texts of Scripture or brief messages of love. A large envelope was prepared into which she placed the leaves. Across the front I read—for I still have it before me—'My Garden,' and underneath, 'Would you like a leaf out of my Garden? If so, please take one or two.' The demand for these became so widespread that she was kept busy. They went into almost every part of the country. One lady in London wrote for one for each of the young women of her class. These precious leaves cheered many a lonely heart, and were gladly welcomed by old and young. Several of them lie on my table at this moment. One I prize more than I can express. On one side I read the passage, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me'; and on the other the significant words, 'And I can bear all pain through Christ which strengtheneth me.' No wonder that so many were attracted to that room, and that from that sacred spot there radiated an influence that made itself felt far and wide. It only remains to add that on July 10, 1870, the end came. It was anticipated for several days, and the doctor told us that in all probability just before she passed away she would recover her lost three senses. It was even so, but only for a few moments; and the purified spirit, made ready by 'much tribulation,' winged its way to the Lord she had loved so deeply and served so well. In a little graveyard near to her home, on July 13, we reverently placed her remains to await the glories of the resurrection morn.

VII

FIRST APPOINTMENT: THE STORY OF A REMARKABLE REVIVAL

Last days in England—Farewell—Clipper ship *Patriarch*—A good R.C. bishop—Arrival in Sydney—First service—First Australian convert—Shipwrecked—Was not wanted—Four hundred conversions—Convict saved at eighty-four—A noble woman's resolve—Remarkable growth of Queensland Methodism.

As may be imagined, it was with no light heart that I left Richmond and went home to get ready for the long voyage to Australia. Death had just visited our home-
nest, and now another was called to leave. At this distance the pen drags as I would fain write of those sad, dark days. Fortunately at that time I wrote a daily record of my thinkings and doings; from that journal I am now able to quote:

'Wednesday, September 7, 1870.—At 8.40 a.m. was called into the Governor's study, and told that a man was wanted for South Australia. The Committee were anxious about my health, and suggested that such an appointment would suit me. . . . On going to prayer, at once felt all anxiety to vanish, and a great peace filled my heart.

'Thursday, 8th.—Journeyed to Hull to place the matter before father and mother. I imagined that mother especially would object to an appointment that meant a permanent severance from the British Conference. To my surprise no objection was offered. With tears in her eyes she looked at me with a pathetic longing that can never be forgotten, and said, "My boy, I just dare not say no. Who am I that I should frustrate the designs of Providence? I give you up to the Lord." My father also, accepting the call as from God, simply added, "You must go, William, you must go." A great weight is thus

removed from my heart, and I now feel free to say "Yes" to the Committee's request. I cannot fail to see the finger of God in this call. Had it come three months earlier, when my precious sister was nearing the dark river, I must have declined. To-day she is in the presence of her Lord; my parents are settled in their new home; my health is not of the best, so that a climate like that of Australia is desirable; the work—so far as I can judge—is just what I long for. Surely God is in this call!

'Friday, 9th.—Am astonished at the quiet manner in which my noble mother takes this appointment. At times I have found her in tears, and once she gave me one of those tender looks, and said, "Oh, my lad, it is like losing two in one year." To her this is a sacrifice indeed, but there is no questioning of the Divine Will, but a quiet and complete resignation to Him.

'Sunday, 11th.—Heard Dr. Osborn this morning preach from Heb. xi. 16—a sermon never to be forgotten. Both in his prayer and in the sermon he made special reference to those present who would probably never again worship in the old familiar College Chapel. In the afternoon I led the open-air service on "The Terrace," and after tea with the Governor's family heard the Rev. Marshall Hartley preach from John xxiii. 6. All through the service, however, my mind was in Australia.

'Monday, 12th.—Went to the Mission House with Mr. Rodd, who goes with me to Australia, and interviewed the Rev. G. T. Perks, M.A., respecting books, outfit, &c. From him I learn that possibly I may be sent to Queensland instead of to Adelaide. What matters it? I am in good hands.

'Tuesday, 13th.—A day the memory of which will, I trust, ever act as an inspiration. Went to the Mission House. "A select party" met for tea, including the Revs. W. B. Boyce, L. H. Wiseman, M.A., G. T. Perks, M.A., William Shaw (from Africa), W. D. Tyack (of City Road), Daniel and Mrs. Sanderson, of the College, together with the students Lewis, Williams, Isitt, and Smalley, bound for New Zealand, and Rodd and myself for Australia. Was encouraged by a chat with Mr. Boyce, who was President of the first Conference in Australia, in 1855, who told me much of the great work to be done in that coming

country. At seven we adjourned to the historic City Road Chapel. A large congregation was assembled to bid farewell to the "young men appointed to the Antipodes." The Rev. Thomas Nightingale and Father Boyce opened the service, and then the six of us were asked to tell the people "what God had done for us." To me this was a moment of fuller surrender. Then followed charges by old Father Shaw and Mr. Perks, the latter of whom made a profound impression on our minds. Personally I felt strangely fired with a desire to live and labour for the people to whom I was being sent. Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Sanderson each spoke words of cheer. . . . That service has been to me as a special ordination for my life's work.

'Thursday, 15th.—Said a sad farewell to dear old Richmond. . . . Never did I imagine that any place could make such tugs at one's heart-strings. Every walk and tree and seat and room about the College and grounds are dear to me. Thank God I know I have not laboured in vain; there are those here to whom the Lord has been pleased to make me a blessing.'

The next month was spent in visits to many friends in Cleveland, saying farewell to the men who had done so much to make my pathway plain, and in preaching in the chapels where I had done my 'prentice work. A further extract or two from my journal, and then comes a long farewell to England.

'Sunday, October 16.—My last Sunday at home! . . . At night we all ventured through the rain to Kingston Chapel. The prayer-meeting afterwards I shall never forget. Was asked to address words of exhortation to the people, but my tongue failed me. The preacher mentioned that this was probably my last Sunday in England, and asked for the prayers of the people. And, oh, how they prayed! Good old Mr. Field and that saint of God, Peter Ashton, completely broke down, and tears flowed on all sides. One petition in Peter's prayer I wish to chronicle: "Lord," said he, whilst emotion almost prevented speech, "Lord, if Thou hast called Brother Taylor to preach the gospel in Australia, not the biggest wave that ever rolled can drown him!"

'Wednesday, 19th.—My last day at home! The grace

of God is all-sufficient ! . . . Spent many hours in heart converse with mother. . . . During the day planted a weeping-ash on the little lawn in front of the house [which still lives, after all these years].

' *Thursday, 20th.*—At 5.30 a.m. I lay on my precious mother's arm, and with my head upon her breast, as if I were a child again, she crooned over me : " Go, my boy, go and do your duty. I shall never see you again in this world, but God bless you." And with such a farewell ringing in my ears I turned to face my life's work beyond the seas.'

The good clipper ship *Patriarch*, in which we were to sail, was delayed for several days. On Sunday, the 23rd, I had to preach, by special desire of the Mission House people, at the New North Road Chapel, London, for James D. Brocklehurst. I had been able to spend but little time in prayer, and as a consequence felt far from at home in the pulpit. My father, Brother Tom, and Cousin Simonson were present, as were also Mr. Adams, from the Mission House, and Maggie and Kate, daughters of Dr. Osborn. The after-prayer-meeting was a very solemn time, the Lord Himself drawing very nigh.

On Wednesday, October 26, we bade farewell to all our dear ones, Mr. Adams, Mr. Sanderson, my grandfather, Aunt Etty, and others, who, together with my dear father, were with us. Oh, these partings ! How they do tug at the heart-strings ! At 6.15 o'clock next morning, Thursday, October 27, the good ship slipped away from Gravesend, and our voyage had begun.

A lengthened diary of the voyage lies before me. It is full of interesting detail. Seventy-six days out of sight of land ; the horrors of sea-sickness ; becalmed under a blazing equatorial sun ; among the icebergs in southern latitudes ; Father Neptune's official visit, with all its attendant horrors ; the vagaries of the ship's table, without milk, vegetables, or fresh meat for two months and a half ; an ideal opportunity for the studying of poor fallen human nature ; religious services under difficulties ; the making of lifelong friendships ; original methods of sermon-making ; the blessings of monotony—all a blessed preparation time for a life's work. This and much more is here depicted. Our captain was an Irish Methodist

from Stephen's Green Chapel, Dublin. One half of the cabins were occupied by a Roman Catholic party, consisting of the Bishop of the Navigator Islands, six nuns, with a number of priests and lay brothers. Of the Bishop it only needs to be mentioned that he was one of Nature's gentlemen and a sincere Christian. With him both Mr. Rodd and myself enjoyed real communion. The nuns were sprightly, vivacious French girls, free, for the time, from the restraints of their Order. The men of the party—all Frenchmen—furnished the most marked of contrasts: plain in feature, some of them ugly, dull of brain, and with enormous appetites. On coming on board they each kissed the Bishop's ring, and were granted many indulgences for the voyage, and right up to the limit thereof they lived. I have never seen men in any part of the world eat as did these budding ecclesiastics. During the voyage Mr. Rodd and I conducted divine worship regularly, and were cheered by evidences of good that was done. It was the custom of the Bishop to listen to us from behind the open door of his cabin, and towards the end of the voyage he spoke in tenderest language of our fellowship.

January 18, 1871—the day of our arrival in the beautiful harbour of Port Jackson—will always stand forth as one of the red-letter days of one's life. The brilliant sunshine overhead, the deep blue of the waters beneath, and the charming scenery of the innumerable headlands and inlets around us—it was glorious. As we dropped anchor in Neutral Bay, a boat laden with clerical-looking gentlemen approached. They were leading divines of the city come out to offer welcome to their two young brethren. Every man of that group has since reached eminence: William Kelynack, D.D., Richard Sellors, D.D., Frederick W. Ward—for some years editor of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*—Mr. Lawrence Kendall, and Mr. John Graham, leading laymen of the York Street Circuit. Then again, it was my twenty-sixth birthday. And such a birthday present as I found awaiting me—a big bundle of letters from the loved ones in England! At the moment my foot first touched Australian soil at the Royal Steps, Circular Quay, I found myself involuntarily offering the prayer, 'Lord, use me in this land to lead many souls to Thee.'

Whether or no that prayer has been answered, it will be for these pages to reveal.

Still another thing that added emphasis to the importance of this day was that in the historic old York Street Church—the place where in after years centred the chief work of my life—that night I opened my commission, preaching to myself, and to a few godly people, from the significant words, ‘Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ Forty-three years afterwards, practically upon the same ground, I preached from the same text, as one of the sermons with which I signalized my retirement from ‘the active work of the ministry.’

We spent a busy month in Sydney, preaching in its various pulpits, addressing missionary meetings and the like, meanwhile being almost hospitalized to death by an over-generous people. My first Australian converts were given me at the Walker Street Church, North Sydney, on Sunday evening, February 12, when I preached for the Rev. F. W. Ward. The fruits of that service remain to this day.

At the end of a memorable month Rodd and I separated after an intimate companionship of nearly three years, he going to his first appointment at Araluen in the Braidwood Circuit, and I on board the paddle-steamer *Lady Young* for Brisbane, there to commence my ministry in the historic Albert Street Church. At the threshold of my ministry I was doomed to meet with two disasters. First I was called to face the dangers and the inconveniences of shipwreck. Within eight hours of leaving Sydney, through the gross carelessness of those in command, the *Lady Young* ran on the rocks near Port Stephens. It was in the middle of the night, and most of the passengers were asleep. The crash was fearful. A hole was driven in the bows ‘big enough for a coach and four to drive through.’ On reversing the engines a second hole was made under the engine-room. Within a few moments two of the four watertight compartments were full of water, and we were only kept from sinking by the strength of the bulkheads. Fortunately the current carried us away from the rocks on to the wide waters of the Pacific.

For twelve hours we drifted, the sailors standing suggestively by the side of the boats, and our lives depending upon the strength of those bulkheads. Throughout all those hours there was an absence of panic. We had faith in our captain, and stood there, hour by hour, scanning the horizon, wondering if help would ever come. Late in the afternoon a tiny timber schooner from the Hawkesbury River hove in sight, and ultimately, not without much difficulty, the passengers were transferred to its little quarter-deck. Never can we forget the genuine goodness of the captain—a good Methodist—who cared for us until we were again transhipped into a passing steamer, which carried us on to Brisbane.

The second set-back was met with upon arrival at Brisbane. There were thousands of people upon the wharves to bid welcome to the shipwrecked ones, but not a Methodist appeared to bid me welcome. Silently I waited, and wondered. Ultimately at ten o'clock that night the Rev. Isaac Harding, Chairman of the Queensland District, appeared. After words of welcome I was told to load myself with my smaller packages and follow his reverence through the crowd. Not a cab was called up, but right through the city, up to the parsonage on the heights of Wickham Terrace, I toiled under the burden of numerous packages, piloted by Father Harding, seated upon his great white horse, with one of my handbags in front of him. With brain at work wondering and with limbs aching, I entered the parsonage for supper. A little before eleven o'clock a second march was started. Up and down the hills we went until 'the Quarries' in Leichhardt Street were reached. Meanwhile no information was vouchsafed as to the programme still ahead. Soon my guide alighted from his horse, opened a gate, and, groping our way along the dark garden path, we found the open door. No further explanation was given than the words, 'Well, Mrs. ———, here is your young guest; I hope you will make him comfortable'; and then, turning to me, 'I hope you will have a good night's rest. To-morrow your appointments will be South Brisbane at eleven and Albert Street at seven. Good-night.'

What was the explanation? Personally it did not worry me one iota. I could but wonder what it meant,

for not one word had been spoken by the dear old minister to indicate that there was anything unusual in proceedings to me so un-English. The explanation came in due course. It transpired that Brisbane Methodism at that time was in low water. Burdensome circuit and trust debts led the Quarterly Meeting to petition the Conference to relieve the circuit of its second minister. The Chairman went to Conference in Hobart, charged with this as his special commission. The Conference refused the request, and 'the young man from England' was put down for Albert Street. The circuit rose in angry revolt, and said, 'We will not receive him'; and neither did they for a while. That accounts for the coldness of my reception and the primitive character of the arrangements made for my accommodation.

In a little while, however, the storm blew over, and I was welcomed into the homes and the hearts of as fine a set of people as I have ever laboured amongst. I soon found that I was called to labour in congenial soil. Two of the happiest years of my ministry were those I spent in Brisbane with the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, B.A., of Fijian fame, as my superintendent—the only 'super,' by the way, that I have had. During those two years the debts on both the circuit and churches were wiped out, and the circuit placed upon a healthy financial basis.

Better still, we were permitted to witness a truly remarkable revival, that extended to every part of the circuit. It broke out in the ordinary course of our ministry. No outside missionary was invited, but every Sunday, and frequently at week-night meetings, the power of God came upon us in a remarkable manner. My first Queensland converts were given me at Albert Street within a few weeks of arrival. I had preached from our Lord's words, 'If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.' The spell of God was on the people, and ere we separated five persons were led into the joy of conscious pardon. Side by side knelt two women, one a fallen woman from the street, the other the wife of a well-known merchant of the city. Although a Presbyterian, she had been led out of curiosity to come to hear the new 'chum' preacher. It was ten o'clock

that night when she reached her home. Entering a little timidly, she said to her husband, 'Old boy, don't be angry with me; the fact is I have given my heart to God to-night.' 'Angry?' cried the good man. 'Angry? Would to God I could but do the same.' Soon they knelt side by side, and before long the husband also was found rejoicing in the sense of sins forgiven. It is interesting to add that within a very short time both of them became prominent workers in the church, and for some years the husband filled the office of circuit steward. Entering into political life, he was later on elected one of Queensland's representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Gradually the work spread. At South Brisbane the communion-rail was filled with penitents at almost every Sunday-night service. The meetings were frequently marked by a truly pentecostal influence. There was no attempt to 'get up' a revival; it simply 'came down,' and in such a fashion that people from far and near came 'to see Jesus.' Albert Street and then Fortitude Valley, the only other Methodist church in the city, soon caught the flame. It mattered little who was the preacher, 'the power of God was present to heal.' Necessity compelled our arranging for extended meetings, which went on week after week for nearly four months. We had no outside help, but the three ministers of the city, William Fletcher, Matthew Henry Parkinson, and myself, pegged away, and soon had the joy of seeing over four hundred who had professed faith in Jesus Christ. All my life I have lived in the midst of revival work, but never have I witnessed a more scriptural, more deep, more permanent work of God than this. At this distance it is not possible to furnish details. Let it suffice to say that amongst the converts of that revival may be included an ex-President of the Queensland Conference; the Acting-Premier of the State, the holder to-day of two portfolios in the Queensland Government and president of the flourishing Y.M.C.A. of the city; his brother, who is also a member of Parliament and leader of probably the finest Society-class in the State, a popular local preacher, and chairman of one of the largest commercial concerns of that growing State. I think also of three brothers of

another family, one of whom is to-day a well-known merchant, another postmaster in a leading town, and the third holding a position of trust in the Civil Service of the State. With gratitude I think of a very difficult case, a lineal descendant of the disciple Thomas, whose mental tendency to doubt wearied and worried me for long. To-day that man is one of the leading laymen of our Church in Queensland, a brother beloved and trusted by everybody.

One night in the Fortitude Valley Church I was surprised to see a prominent solicitor at the communion-rail among the anxious ones. After the service, I congratulated him upon the stand he had taken, and asked him what led to his taking so important a step. Said he, 'Last night I stopped at home to mind the children whilst my wife and maid went to the South Brisbane Church. I wondered at my wife's absence until nearly ten o'clock, but when she came in I saw that something wonderful had happened. Soon she told me that at the service she had found the Christ. Instantly my decision was made, and to-night I have walked these three miles'—there were neither trams nor omnibuses in those days—'on purpose to give my heart to God.'

Probably the most remarkable instance of the power of the grace of God witnessed was that of an ex-convict, eighty-four years of age. When a mere lad, working in a Yorkshire factory, he married, and within a week of his marriage was cruelly transported for life on the charge of stealing 8s. 6d. and a silk handkerchief. He was sent out either to Botany Bay or to Port Arthur, where, exasperated by the iniquitous sentence, all the devil that was in him came to the surface. Again and again he sought to escape, and suffered the severest punishment in consequence. When it was decided to establish a penal settlement at Moreton Bay, Queensland, the worst men in the southern settlements were drafted north. This man was among them. He was entered as one of the most incorrigible men in the gang. Several times he again sought to escape; and during the long years of his convict life received 1,731 lashes on his back for acts of insubordination. When an old man he received the Queen's conditional pardon. For over sixty years he

had never heard a line from wife or friends. A lonely, broken old profligate, he one Sunday night, in the Albert Street Church, tottered up to the communion-rail, and took his place among the seekers. His conversion was as thorough as it was remarkable. Up to the day of his death he witnessed a good confession before all with whom he came in contact.

Another remarkable incident occurred during the progress of this work of God that is worth chronicling. Naturally large numbers of the senior scholars of the Sunday school were found amongst the converts. One day the superintendent of the Sunday school, Mr. Nathaniel Lade, and I were in conversation with the mother of several of the finest scholars in the school. 'Have any of your young folk found the Lord at any of the services?' asked Mr. Lade. I have never forgotten the good woman's look as she answered, 'I will never allow Mr. Taylor or Mr. Anybody-else to lead any of my children to Christ.' For the moment I was staggered, for the dear soul was one of the most devout members of my Society-class. 'What do you mean?' anxiously asked Mr. Lade. 'I mean just this,' was her answer. 'God has given me my children, I am responsible to Him for them, and no man shall ever rob me of the sweet luxury of winning them for Him.' It was even so. Just as one after another reached years of discretion they were seen to yield to God, and sought admission into the fellowship of the church. If only every Christian mother would but 'go and do likewise,' what a wonderful Church ours would soon become!

I have already spoken of the wealth of affection showered upon me in this my first circuit. I was as happy and jovial as a sandboy—living in my study in the mornings, in the saddle, at work amongst my people, in the afternoons, and almost every night conducting services in or around the city. In the midst of this blessed work, in order partly to help keep my own heart right with God, and also to aid the many young converts in their growth in grace, I published a pastoral letter, containing, in extended form, 'Morning's Resolves,' and evening 'Heads of Self-examination.' A copy is before me. It smells of the Puritanism of Fuller or of Rutherford, together with the introspection of a David Stoner or a Bramwell.

88 AN AUSTRALIAN EVANGELIST

I wonder at the temerity that rendered such a production possible, and yet I have the feeling that it would not, in these times, hurt our good people were a little more of this kind of thing brought under their notice.

Before closing this chapter let me direct attention to the abnormal growth of our Church in this progressive State of Queensland. The following is a comparison between the figures of 1870—the year of my entrance into the ministry—and those of 1915, a period of forty-five years. The figures under the first date are those of the old Wesleyan Church. There were a few Primitive Methodist churches also in the Colony, the particulars of which I have been unable to secure. The figures of 1915 are those of the United Church:

	1870	1915
Ministers	9	94
Churches	26	303
Local Preachers	45	445
Class-leaders	31	106
Church Members	373	10,434
Junior Members	—	1,091
Sabbath Schools	26	312
Sabbath Scholars	1,600	19,309
Adherents (including children)	3,380	54,732

VIII

PIONEERING REMINISCENCES

Unique circuit surroundings—A *terra incognita*—Abnormal development—The typical bushman's horse—A funny story—Dear old Cooperbrook—Saved by a horse—Buck-jumping experiences—Twice thrown—First service at Crow's Nest—Truth stranger than fiction—An original church—Still more original congregation—Does pioneering pay?

I CAN think of few experiences better calculated to test the metal of which a minister is made than to put him down in an Australian way-back circuit, far removed from friends, railways, or telephones, with no church buildings, no parsonage, few if any church members, and with no guarantee as to payment of stipend. English Methodism furnishes nothing analogous to this. But in the past it has been a common experience, which many a young minister has been called to face, in this 'land of magnificent distances.' During one of my visits to England I occasionally delivered a lecture on 'Pioneering Experiences in Australia.' At Yarmouth the superintendent minister presided. When, at the end of the lecture, I resumed my seat, the good man rose and said, 'Had I not personally known Mr. Taylor I should have concluded that we had been listening to a story that one could not believe to be true.' Even so. The wilds of Australia must necessarily be a *terra incognita* to such men as my Yarmouth chairman.

Let me give you a few illustrative facts. Only the other day I was conversing with an honoured supernumerary minister of our N.S. Wales Conference—the Rev. W. E. Bourne—who informed me that when, years ago, he was appointed to the North Coast Circuit—a young man of only six years' standing—he had charge of a district larger than Yorkshire, without a colleague, with very few local preachers, the roads mere bush tracks, and the

rivers without bridges. To-day in that same district are 19 ministers, 3 home missionaries, 62 churches, and many thousands of Methodists. Quite recently a young probationer in charge of 'a territory' stated to the Conference that he had to travel over 6,000 miles a year, mostly in the saddle, and over the roughest of rough bush roads. Another minister a little while ago told me how in his first circuit he knocked up eight horses in one year.

To-day, one of the joys of my life gathers around the memory of my own pioneering experiences of other days. They were numerous, varied, humorous, and sometimes all but tragic in their character. But they are precious memories, all of them !

Horses! Australian horses—big-boned, strong-limbed, sturdy-lunged, high-withered horses of the bush—do you know anything about them? Gigs, buggies, bicycles, automobiles, trolly-cars, aeroplanes, and whatnot—the joy of them all is as a flea-bite compared to the thrilling delight of a forty-mile ride upon such a steed as my people presented to me on the threshold of my Australian ministry. He was known as a squatter's roadster, a splendid brute, chestnut in colour and standing over sixteen hands high. His name was 'Hobgobblings,' but, as he was now to enter the Church, I rechristened him 'Warrior.' And a fine old soldier he proved to be ! What miles of weary bush track we ran down together, and what times of fun and frolic we had away up among those densely timbered hills ! It happened that I was the first 'new minister' who had ever faced his first journey across those spurs without a guide, but Warrior never failed me. He seemed to smell out the right track, and when there was no road, to steer as by the compass.

Here is a funny story that I have sometimes used to illustrate what we called misplaced sympathy. One dreadfully hot Sunday afternoon I was wearily ambling into town after a long and exciting day's work, when I overtook a typical cockatoo farmer jogging along on the shaggiest of shaggy ponies. We were soon launched upon a bush yarn, meaning that I did the talking, the farmer answering in monosyllables, meanwhile smoking a filthy pipe. I told him how I had left my diggings

at seven that morning ; had ridden seventeen miles over the wildest bush tracks ; how at ten o'clock I had reached the primitive bush church hidden behind a clump of scrub-trees, had addressed the Sunday-school children, then preached to the settlers and their families, and afterwards met the members in a church meeting ; how I had then ridden several miles to dinner, and was soon in the saddle again climbing over a rough mountain track, pushing my way for nearly two hours, under a broiling sun, through the primeval forest, at length reaching a pioneer's hut, preaching to a dozen people seated among the corn cobs in a slab barn ; and how, again, without bite or sup, I had mounted Warrior for a weary fourteen-mile journey to the town—and remember this was in Queensland, and the month was February, the steamiest month of the year—and that at the end of my journey I had to preach to some five hundred people and afterwards administer the Sacrament. All this I told to my farmer friend, and confess to feeling some degree of self-satisfaction as I added, ' Now what do you think of that for a new chum ? ' That wretched specimen of a man looked at me and my horse for a full minute ; then, deliberately taking his pipe from his mouth, in a manner that spelt cruelty personified, drawled out, '*My—word—that's—hard—on—the—'oss.*'

The best horse I ever put my leg across was dear old Coopernook, a strong-limbed, somewhat ungainly looking black, able to amble at the rate of eight miles an hour. That one horse was my daily companion, carrying me some fifteen thousand miles during the three years that together we worked that big bush circuit. City folk have no idea of the wealth of affection existing between a horse and his rider under circumstances such as these. Have you ever heard a horse talk ? If not, then pray cease your criticisms of horseflesh. What long, long talks Coopernook and I had together—I with my tongue, he responding with his ears ! Together—to our own satisfaction, at any rate—we solved many of the up-to-date sociological, political, and theological questions that were the worry of our less fortunate city brethren. Together we discussed the personnel of my Quarterly Meeting, doing, by the way, sometimes more than a little

backbiting as we exposed the stinginess of Bro. Shanks or the cynicism of Bro. Knowall. The points of my new sermons were brought under review, and I always found my auditor appreciative; that is more than I could say of some of my bush congregations. Eh, how I loved that horse, and how he loved his master! Let me but cough in my room at the parsonage, and immediately there would be a responsive neigh from the house paddock.

One day we were travelling together over some of the worst country you could well imagine. It was Monday, and my work on the previous day had consisted of three hours in the saddle and five hours in a rowing-boat, with three services to boot, and this morning I had had another twenty miles on the river in a wretched leaky boat, and was now on my way home over the mountains, weary and depressed. Before long the sun went down, leaving us to negotiate those nearly twenty miles of bridle-track in the dark. The inevitable soon happened; we were lost in the bush. My predecessor, under similar circumstances, hobbled his horse and sat down on the hard ground to await the dawn. But I had faith in Coopernook, and, throwing the reins upon his neck and patting him on the head, said to him, 'Well, old fellow, I'm at the end of things. You know this country better than I; off you go.' I tell you that was a ride to be remembered. There was not the ghost of a track; the forest had never been thinned by axe. For four hours I had no idea whither I was being taken. Every now and again I was nearly swept off the saddle by branches of widespreading trees; down the deepest gorges, up the steepest ridges we crept. Hour after hour that noble horse threaded his way through. I was beginning at last to doubt my guide, when, at about midnight, I was thrilled with excitement as Coopernook brought me out on to the highway within twenty yards of the proper bridle-track. Be not surprised if I confess that I flung my arms around that faithful creature's neck and hugged him as if he had been a human being.

By-the-by, have you ever seen a buck-jumper? I mean the real thing—the uneducated, fiery-tempered, hard-mouthed, wicked-eyed Australian buck-jumper; the brute that can arch his back so suddenly as to shoot you straight out of the saddle, that can seem to be facing

almost every point of the compass at the same moment, whose angry snorting and whose kickings and plungings and rearings and side-jumping, with all four legs as stiff as walking-sticks, is no child's play, I can assure you, even to the best-seasoned bushman in all the Wild West.

The first time I saw a buck-jumper I was, unfortunately, upon his back. I had been married but a few weeks. My girl-bride was at the back-door of the parsonage watching me mount a borrowed horse 'warranted to be quiet.' Without a second's warning I discovered myself in the vortex of a combined earthquake, hurricane, and maelstrom. The first jump, and I found myself kneeling upon the saddle; the next sent me sprawling on to my poor back. Oh, the sight of that wicked horse's heels away above me as I lay gasping in the grass, and what seemed the far-distant voice of my girl-wife crying out, 'Where are you? Oh, Will darling, are you hurt?'

Another experience of the kind almost led to a tragic end. We were in the midst of a big church-building scheme in the town of Toowoomba. On the morrow His Excellency the Governor was to lay the foundation-stone. Naturally I was a busy man that day. Just previously I had purchased a young well-bred iron-grey horse from a famous horse-breeder of the West. Saddling him early on this frosty morning, I noticed a wicked look in his eye. You must know, by the way, that if there is any of the old Adam in a horse it is bound to come to the surface in frosty weather. In somewhat gingerly fashion I essayed to mount. In a second an earthquake broke out around me, and the poor young parson was literally shot out of the saddle, turning a complete somersault, and coming down on the hard road on the broad of his back. For a time I felt as if a dozen bones were broken. Strangely enough, however, with the aid of the doctor I was able to pilot through the important functions of the following day.

The mention of Toowoomba reminds me of an interesting experience in that district in those early days. A ride of five hours over rough bush tracks, under a hot sun, brought me at sunset to a recently erected bush public-house, a mere shanty, situated in the midst of dense bush, with miles on miles of valuable pine-tree country all around.

Everything was in a state of primitive roughness: a pioneer clearing here and there, an occasional saw-mill, with settlements of timber-getters near by. What brawny-armed, broad-chested fellows these were—fond of strong drink, black tea, and rankest tobacco, and sadly addicted to the use of sulphurous language. Yet they were fine fellows, many of them; generous to a fault, and often with hearts as tender as a child. Living in the atmosphere of danger, they handled those monsters of the forest as if they were garden saplings. Among these fellows I determined to start a service; hence the journey of to-day. The young parson received a rough-and-ready welcome from the publican's wife, and was invited to tea. I should make a big tug at the credulity of conventional readers were I to give an exact report of that meal. The utterly unsavoury character of the food baffles description. The tea was made from water taken from a dirty water-hole in front of the house, made black by the much trampling of a team of working bullocks. Tell me not of the famous brew of ancient witches! My tea-cup revealed a combination of liquid horrors equal to the worst of them. I was hungry as a hunter, for had I not ridden thirty bush miles under a broiling sun? As each plate in turn was inspected, like Mark Twain's Innocents, 'I passed.' To make matters worse, a burly bullock-driver, fresh from the dust of the road, sat down opposite to me. Ugh! the bearded giant wore neither coat nor shirt; his singlet was of the scantiest, revealing a chest broad and shaggy as a lion. The man literally steamed with the heat. With a shrug of disgust I left the house, preferring the mosquitoes of the adjoining swamp to the company of a table-mate of that order.

But I had come to preach, and, hungry as I was, I set to work to get my congregation. A shed in the publican's paddock—a cross between a barn and a pigsty—was pointed out by the publican's wife. The night was 'as dark as a bull's mouth'; a congregation of a dozen men, smoking dirty pipes and discussing dogs, gave me their patronage. But nobody had thought of lights. After much searching we discovered an empty gingerbeer bottle. This we filled with oil supplied by the publican, and, with extemporized wick hanging from its mouth, our church light was secured.

Lighting up, we formed a procession, not quite as spectacular, but arranged with the same purpose, as those of Westminster Abbey. Led by the publican, the parson followed, the bearer (as was meet) of the lighted torch, and followed by a silent, wondering group of smoking men. How we got through that service may never be put on paper. The singing would have disgraced a pond full of healthy frogs. There was one good old Methodist present, and he did help to give a semblance of reality to the proceedings. What I preached from I do not remember. I could see the faces of but few of my congregation. Probably most of them were asleep; at all events the preacher nearly was. It is interesting, however, to note that upon that spot now stands the rising town of Crow's Nest, with numerous stores, attractive churches, and comfortable homes. It is the head of an extensive and prosperous circuit, with a minister residing within a stone's throw of that original pub, with 7 local preachers, 153 members, and 1,750 attendants on public worship.

I wonder whether I may venture upon still another pioneer experience before resuming the main track of my story. This vast continent of the South awaits the coming of a Ralph Connor or an Ian Maclaren to vocalize the experiences of the bush, especially as we knew it in years gone by. Neither Canada nor the Scotch Highlands have been richer in the production of unusual characters than can be furnished from among the pioneer farmers, the gold prospectors, and the timber-getters of these lands. In realistic form there is still stamped upon my brain my own experiences amongst some of the most original and primitive of these children of the bush. Suppressing names for obvious reasons, I would like to introduce you to a mountainous timber range in one of my early circuits. A bridle-track of twenty miles over black-butt ridges, and through treacherous marshlands and river scrubs, carries one from the parsonage into the midst of as strange a set of people as I have ever met. Let me give you details of my first visit. At the end of four hours' hard riding I pull up at an ancient-looking hut, and am welcomed by four grown females, all bare-footed, and introduced into a home devoid of comfort. The day is gloomy and cold, and the rain begins to pour down in torrents. So

rotten is the roof that the only dry place I can find is within the primitive but capacious fireplace. There the parson sits, vainly trying to read a chapter from Joseph Entwisle's *Life*. Within two feet of my head festoons of cockroaches are hanging like a swarm of bees. Worse still, the woman of the household—to me, at this time, quite a new type—is busy on Sunday's dinner. Alas, the thought of that woman's apron and the purposes to which it was put gives me the shivers to this day! Can it be wondered that the young parson puts his book before his eyes and breathes a prayer, 'Lord, help me not to look'? I will spare you an account of my first dinner in that place. Generally, in those days I could eat almost anything, from damper to wallaby; but this place beat me. The good people could not understand my remarkable partiality for boiled eggs.

The prophet's chamber measures exactly eight feet by five, with damp mud floor. A glassless opening in the wall, a foot square, serves as window, said walls being made of unsquared bush slabs, so wide apart as to give ample scope for the passage of curious snakes in their nocturnal visits; whilst a perfect opportunity is afforded for studying astronomy through the rotten shingles overhead. It is a cold, windy night. To protect my tired limbs I proceed to ram coat, vest, and pants into the openings around the bed, whilst another portion of my attire is festooned over and around my head. Could you sleep, gentle reader, under such circumstances? At all events I could not, especially when I mention that numerous strange creeping things would persist in seeking shelter near my bed from the rain and wind without.

Let me describe my first service among these good folk. The 'church' is a skillion, or lean-to, attached to the back portion of the old house, measuring twenty feet by ten. The floor is made of virgin mud, the walls and roof a counterpart of the prophet's chamber. I am at my wits' end to describe that pulpit. Built as a labour of love by a bush carpenter of original mind, it resembles nothing of its kind that I have seen in any part of the world. A gigantic coffin placed on end approximates the truth. In honour of the first visit of the new minister mine host has spent some time in polishing this unique

piece of furniture with beef-suet. How the stuff sticks, and how pungent the smell! The parson is not one of the shortest of men, and yet his breast only reaches to a level with the book-board. One of those monstrosities, a pulpit stool, is necessary, built, like everything else in this primitive region, after an original pattern—a thick square piece of grey-gum, with four legs, made by sticks inserted in auger holes, bored, alas, too near the centre of that wretched block. In the middle of my first sermon the inevitable happens: through my standing too near the edge of that stool I suddenly disappear. As the service proceeds we hear the sizzling of the dinner being cooked in the adjoining kitchen. A swallow has built her nest within two feet of the preacher's head, and calmly surveys the scene throughout the service. A tame magpie hops on to the window-sill and whistles 'There's nae luck about the house.'

Special mention must be made of the seats in this remarkable ecclesiastical building. Twelve in number, they are formed of rough bush slabs, adzed on the upper surface, and made to stand by sticks put through auger holes at one end, the other end leaning upon a batten nailed along the wall.

An unusually large congregation greets the new parson this morning. What a grotesque mingling of form and colour in shirts, hats, and bonnets; and what stolid but true-hearted fellows those timber-getters! I am just in the middle of my first lesson when we are startled by a crash. I lift up my eyes, to find the congregation—on the floor! That wretched batten, eaten through by white ants, has broken, and one end of the whole twelve seats has come to grief. Can one ever forget the stolid look upon the faces of that strangely mixed crowd, as there they sit without an attempt to move, one of the men calling out, 'Go on, sir; it can't be helped; we must sit where we be.' And sit they did right to the end of the service.

Probably you ask, what could our Church make out of material such as this? They were certainly all of them simple sons of Nature, unlike any people I have ever met with. I managed to induce the Government to send them their first day-school mistress. Soon there was a revolt in the camp, and a petition was sent to the authorities

asking to have the young woman removed because she dared to teach their children that the earth was round, in direct opposition to the teachings of the Bible. 'How can the world be round,' said they, 'when the Bible speaks of "the ends of the earth"?'

But listen! Throughout this primitive district a gracious revival broke out, a comfortable church was erected, and soon the Government built school premises in which many fine young folk have been fitted for their life's work. During a recent visit I found the district throbbing with intelligence. Another generation has come to the fore. I found the people taking a keen interest in politics, a keener interest still in the moral and religious life of the community. The place is to-day the head of a growing Methodist circuit, with a minister in residence, reaping a rich harvest from the pioneer sowings of other days.

Does pioneering pay? In addition to the answers above given, let me assure my readers that in the wilds of Australia I have again and again seen fulfilled the ancient prophecy, 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.' Isaiah was no wild dreamer when he foresaw the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together. Australia furnishes many illustrations of such happenings. Where half a century ago were trackless forests, to-day may be seen a civilization of advanced type and a religion of a kind that would do credit to the oldest and the best of lands. Methodism has proved to be *the* pioneer Church of these lands of the South; in most cases the first in the field, and to-day as zealous as any to keep the flag of an earnest, sane, practical evangelism flying.

IX

ON THE TABLELANDS: MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL ADVANCE

The famous Darling Downs—Methodism's beginnings—Remarkable first service—A sweeping revival—Teamster's conversion—'That wretched dog'—Marriage—A bold new church scheme—God at the helm—Toowoomba in the making—Those glorious rides!—A contented church—The restless parson—How the congregation jumped from eighty to five hundred—Over one hundred conversions in a week—The new church—Vice-royalty and Methodism—'Move on.'

At the end of two years' service in the Albert Street Circuit, Brisbane, I was unexpectedly removed, to make room for a second married minister, rendered possible as the result of the gracious revival with which the circuit had been visited. The next six years were spent upon the famous Darling Downs, one of the richest and healthiest, and since become one of the most prosperous, districts in Australia. Who that has seen them can ever forget those vast sweeps of undulating downs, separated one from another by iron-bark timber ridges, in my time the happy abode of hundreds of thousands of sheep, but to-day largely given over to the still more lucrative occupation of wheat farming? These downs constitute a great tableland, 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, giving one of the finest climates in the Commonwealth. At some period the whole territory must have been under water, the rich black alluvial soil being in places from twenty to thirty feet deep. In my early days Methodism in all this territory was worked from two centres, Warwick and Toowoomba.

Warwick was established as a circuit in 1859, when Queensland was still a portion of the colony of New South Wales. The Rev. William Fidler was its first minister, there being but three Wesleyan ministers and a supernumerary in the whole of what is now the State of Queensland

For a number of years progress was so slow that in 1873—the year of my appointment—there were only 35 members and 320 persons as adherents of the church in the entire circuit. The now beautiful and thriving town of Warwick was then a sleepy little township of less than 2,000 inhabitants. Methodism was in a bad way there: no Sunday school, only eighteen members of Society, and party feeling crushing out what life still remained. The average Sunday-evening congregation numbered thirty, whilst the old slab building in which they worshipped was of so nondescript a character as to lead a witty visiting minister to say of it that you might fall down and worship it without breaking any one of the Ten Commandments, for it was made after the likeness of nothing that was in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth.

I can never adequately express my gratitude to God for the manner in which He Himself solved the depressing problems that I found awaiting me, by the immediate outpouring of His Holy Spirit. At the first Sunday-evening service a remarkable influence settled down upon the congregation. Many were bathed in tears, and ere we separated eleven persons came forward as seekers of salvation, amongst these being the two circuit stewards—between whom for several years there had been a painful estrangement—and several other leading members of the church. This was a new thing in Warwick, and naturally caused much comment. At once the little slab church began to fill. Within a short period we were compelled to take our Sunday-night congregation to the town-hall, which in turn was soon filled to the doors. Meanwhile a truly remarkable work of God had broken out, the influence of which affected the whole district. Arrangements had to be made for an extended series of special services. Those meetings practically made the Methodism of Warwick. Thence onward the cause has continued to advance, until to-day the circuit stands out as one of the best in the State.

I have before me a list of the converts of that time of wonderful visitation. It contains the names of quite a number of the leading people of the district, many of whom have since put their impress upon the religious life of the

community. After forty years that list greets me with the names of many who are still at the forefront of things political, commercial, and religious. I can furnish no finer answer than this to the quibbles of doubters as to the permanent character of the results of revival work. Out of that list of 127 names, quite a number are to-day Christian stalwarts, scattered all over Australia, but still true to the stand for God they took in that old slab church. They include the father and mother of the first missionary sent by our Church in Australia to the mission-field of India, one who was for years a member of the Queensland Upper House of Parliament, three brothers and a sister connected with leading Irish Methodist families, several who are to-day local preachers, and others who have achieved success in the commercial world.

One night a man came forward dressed in an extraordinary suit of black and white—like a moving checker-board. He was a well-known teamster of the district, and a godless one to boot. How that man cried for mercy! And how great his joy when at last the light of God flashed into his soul! He immediately made a stand amongst the many teamsters—a notoriously godless set of men—with whom he came in contact. At the end of a month he came to me with the saddest of sad faces. 'Look here, sir, it's no use my trying to be a Christian. I'll have to give it up. Yesterday my team was pulling a heavy load of stuff along the Stanthorpe Road, when the wagon got into a bog. Try as I would I couldn't get her out. And before I knew where I was, I was swearing at my team as badly as I did before I was converted. Bother it, what's the good of trying?' Thank God that man did 'try again,' and became a tower of strength to the church. A more devoted Christian I have rarely met; and, better still, all the members of his large family became Christians, whilst to-day a number of the third generation are prominently attached to the church.

As the work progressed, a number of men of the order of my friend the teamster commenced to attend our services. Unfortunately every one of them seemed to be the owner of a dog, and they, dear fellows, could see nothing incongruous in bringing their dogs with them to church. Please remember that at this time I had scarcely got over

my strict English sense of decorum. Those scratching dogs annoyed me. At last, one hot Sunday morning, I broke out into a lecture on 'Without are dogs.' How I did talk to those poor fellows, to be sure, telling them that in future they must tie up their dogs before coming to church! Well and good; but, alas, the very next Sunday morning those dear good souls got their revenge. I happened to be the proud possessor of a beautiful Scotch collie—well bred, well behaved, quite above suspicion. I was well on in my sermon that morning—how I do remember it!—when, to my amazement, in through the front door, looking the personification of stately dignity, marched my collie; without looking to right or left, as slowly as if he were an undertaker, he walked up the aisle, mounted the pulpit steps, turned slowly round, and, carefully choosing his position, lay down at my feet, with his face to the congregation. Didn't those men have a good time? And wasn't I properly discomfited? I have rarely since then ventured upon another diatribe on the sin of bringing dogs to church.

Up to now I have said but little touching one of the most important events of my life; my lady readers will intuitively understand what! In my college days there was a ridiculous rule, strictly enforced by our Spartan Governor, that during his stay in the institution no student must contract a matrimonial engagement. In a missionary college such a rule was as foolish as it was pernicious. I will not tell of what frequently happened in the case of others, but personally I loyally observed the strict letter of the law. I am not prepared, however, to confess of my interviews with a certain young lady, and how, without a word being spoken or a hint given, two hearts were gradually drawn together. If ever a young fellow sought wisdom from on high touching his life choice, I did. The poets write of marriages that are arranged in heaven. Mine was certainly of that order. Upon my arrival in Queensland I wrote the letter, and received the answer, that has meant to us over forty-four years of unbroken happiness. Miss Robey was an earnest worker in the Kew Road Church at Richmond. In a remarkable manner she and two others were brought into the light of God in the study of my venerated old friend, the late Rev. E. O. Coleman. I still have in my

study, as one of my prized possessions, a photographic group of these three taken just after their conversion.

In the autumn of 1873 my fiancée sailed from London on the good ship *Alexander Duthie*. The voyage was long and rough, occupying over three and a half months, the first half of which she suffered so seriously from sea-sickness as to lead to the fear that she would never reach Australia. She, however, arrived at Brisbane on February 18, 1874, and a week afterwards—on the 25th—we were married in the drawing-room of the Hon. John. S. Turner, M.L.C., of 'Kinellan,' by the Rev. F. T. Brentnall, a nephew of my old Middlesbrough class-leader, assisted by the Rev. John Gardiner. Mr. Turner was the eldest son of one of the most remarkable and most saintly men given to our Church in Australia, the Rev. Nathaniel Turner, and at the time of our marriage was one of the leading office-bearers of the Albert Street Church. To him more than to any one is probably due the stately pile of buildings now standing in Albert Street, one of the finest Gothic structures in the Southern World.

Our honeymoon was spent—well, it has never been spent; we are spending it still. I hope to make the acquaintance of King Lemuel in the next world, that I may express to him my gratitude for his writing of that wonderful picture of 'a good wife' found in the last chapter of Proverbs. Lemuel was no romancer. I take that chapter to be a mental photograph of his own home. In many respects mine has been like unto it. For over forty-four years we have been chums, comrades, friends together, as well as husband and wife, the mother of my eight children, all of whom, with an enthusiasm that is splendid, 'arise up, and call her blessed,' the sharer with me of a thousand worries, the carrier of many a heavy burden, a Martha in her tender care of those she loves, a Mary in her quiet devotion to her Lord! And, oh, how well she has seconded my efforts to add to the Church in every circuit in which we have laboured—a tower of strength in the inquiry-room, and a ray of sunshine in every sick-chamber! Why should I not write thus of one who came to me as God's good gift, and but for whose loving, loyal, capable comradeship I should not have been writing at this table to-day?

On February 26 we entered our first home in Warwick

Here were born our two eldest children, Harold Morton Warwick and Fanny Gertrude, the first 'children of the parsonage' born on the Darling Downs.

The soul-saving work of which I have written still continuing, necessity compelled us to face a building scheme. For years the little band of members had longed to be able to build, and had prepared plans for a small brick church to cost £600. This blessed work of God altered all that, and with a joyous heart the people set to work to erect a commodious church.

A tea-meeting was arranged. Alas, torrential rains flooded the town on the day appointed; but three hundred optimistic spirits waded through mud and water, and that night, to the amazement of the town, £593 was raised. Instantly the thing caught fire, people of all Churches offering their help. A courageous band of trustees secured, at the nominal cost of £5, a special Act of Parliament, enabling us to dispose for the sum of £562 of the Crown grant of two acres upon which stood the old church, and which was far removed from the centre of the town. A central site was secured at the cost of £165, plans were called for, and tenders accepted for a stone church capable of seating four hundred. The total cost of this was £2,194 6s. 9d., the whole of which sum was raised before the day of opening, with the exception of £231 18s. 6d., which amount was later on wiped off, and further responsibilities incurred in the shape of extensive school premises. It may prove of interest to old Darling Downers to know that, of the money given, nearly £500 came from people not connected with our church, including £141 from squatters and £67 from Brisbane and other merchants. The town was in a mild state of excitement on the day the foundation-stone was laid by my bride-wife—February 24, 1875—the dedicatory services being held on 'Separation Day,' December 10, of the same year. The Rev. Arthur Rutledge—now a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland—took a prominent part in the opening services. Not many days passed ere the cry of the penitent and the joyous outburst of the saved were heard in the beautiful new building.

In addition to this scheme, the circuit purchased a brick house, with an acre and a half of land, for the parsonage,

made extensive improvements in several of the country churches, established Methodist ordinances in Stanthorpe—now the head of a thriving circuit—and spread out in the direction of what are to-day known as the Killarney and Goondiwindi Home Mission Stations, the debts upon the whole properties being less than £500.

I have been careful in thus stating these facts, inasmuch as I am anxious that it should be known that this remarkable result must all be placed to the credit of the spiritual revival with which God had blessed the district. All through my life I have demonstrated this fact: given a real live spiritual church, built upon evangelistic lines, and you need never worry about matters of *£ s. d.* The money will come when the right atmosphere has been created. Before this Warwick revival the officials were perplexed to find money with which to pay the stipend of a probationer. After the revival I was paid £10 per quarter over the minimum, the furniture for the parsonage was paid for, on my marriage I was presented with a beautiful cut-under buggy, and on leaving the circuit with a cheque for £60—all this in addition to the building schemes of which I have written. Would that far and wide it could but be ingrained into the very soul of the Church that God's order is this: First, a spiritual church; secondly, an aggressive missionary spirit; thirdly, financial prosperity. A curious document lies before me, giving a summarized account of my work in the Warwick Circuit for three years. From this I venture to take the following: Sermons preached, 465; prayer- and class-meetings held, 428; sundry meetings, 188—making an average of between seven and eight per week; distance travelled, 11,532 miles, an average of 76 per week; baptisms, 83; marriages, 26; funerals, 11.

At the Conference of 1876 we were appointed to Toowoomba, a city in the making, with a population of some 6,000. To-day it is one of the finest inland cities of Australia, with a population of well on to 20,000, with splendid tree-planted streets, up-to-date State and civic properties, and noble churches. Situated on the edge of the famous Darling Downs, it enjoys a climate unsurpassed in Australia, and is much frequented by people from the hotter parts of the State. Forty years ago the town was in the initial stages of development, and presented problems not easy of

solution. I often wonder how we managed to carry on the operations of our church, with unmade roads, almost impassable in rainy weather, with no support from Connexional funds, and with the majority of our scattered people only beginning to emerge from the difficulties of new settlement. Nine years previously the Toowoomba Circuit had been established, with the redoubtable Charles Olden as its minister. At the first Quarterly Meeting there were four present, the income from all sources stood at £36 8s. 9d. of which £23 16s. 9d. was represented by 'Special Subscriptions,' and the members' roll stood at 24, with 6 on trial, which during the following nine years had grown to 49. I had been put in charge of a territory—that to-day is represented by five circuits and six ministers—with no colleague, no circuit missionary, and but three or four local preachers. Naturally, travelling, mostly on horseback, was incessant. One journey of nearly one hundred miles, over the roughest of tracks, with the plainest of fare at the end, had regularly to be undertaken to minister to not more than thirty people. But it was joyous work. How I used to make those forest glades ring with laughter and with song! Can I ever explain the exhilaration, the utter abandon of those hours of joyous galloping through that almost trackless forest, or those still more sacred hours of heart communion with the Infinite amid all that wealth of primitive beauty, or describe the fascination that was mine, as I listened to and answered the innumerable calls of the feathered dwellers in all those tree heights?

Never can I adequately voice the wealth of surprise and of gladness that was mine one never-to-be-forgotten spring morning. It was not yet four o'clock, and the dawn was just breaking. I had tried in vain to sleep in a settler's filthy humpy, and was glad to escape to the open. Talk about the 'untold charm of Nature's music'! I was in the midst of it, bathed in it, until my heart was full to overflowing with the joyousness of it all. The forest seemed alive with happy animal life, all, as it seemed to me, intent on praising God. You talk of your cultured choirs, of your marvellous oratorio music, rendered at your musical festivals; I tell you they are not in it when God takes the baton and beats time to the primitive and uncultured choirs of these Australian forest lands. Eh, how those

birds did sing—hundreds of them of every colour, and of every size, from the sombre macaw to the sweet little twittering blue-finch. Each after his kind, they sang as if their throats would burst ; soprano, contralto, tenor, bass—they were all in it. And down below the green frogs beat their tom-toms ; and up in yonder blue-gum the jackasses chattered and laughed their applause ; and away in that far-off brushland the bell-birds struck their note of welcome to this worship of the woods ; and still farther away, on the slopes of distant hills, as a slightly sombre setting to all this concert of sweetness, could be heard the plaintive cooings of the Wonga Wonga pigeons ! Such were the compensations that gave zest to these endless journeyings into the distant parts of my big circuit.

In Toowoomba itself there were problems of another kind awaiting solution. On our arrival we were welcomed by a congregation of lovely people—intelligent, well-to-do, and, alas, contented. For years they had worshipped in a brick church that seated just eighty people, placed right in the heart of a rapidly growing town, with already 6,000 people in it. They had a sweet little organ, and a select little choir, and a beautiful little carved pulpit ; and they were as happy and contented as could be, too contented by far, with no response to the appeals for a forward movement that were made to them. ‘What do you want to bother us for ?’ said one of the pillars of the church. ‘We are happy, and are really doing well. Why not let well alone ?’

But I was restless. You see, I was little more than a lad, and a lad full of enthusiasm that would persist in finding voice. For the life of me I could not rest content with those lovely family services when I knew that, could my people be persuaded to move, we might easily multiply our congregation four or fivefold. The Quarterly Meeting came round, and now, thought I, is my chance. Gradually plans were prepared and presented to that lilliputian gathering of really godly men, who smiled and wanted to pass on to the next business. But I was persistent, and pleaded all I knew how, but pleaded in vain. At last in desperation I cried, ‘Anyway, meet me thus far. As an experiment let us take the School of Arts for just one Sunday.’ To end the discussion they agreed to this compromise. The School of

Arts was engaged, the finest hall in the town. On Sunday morning we had a congregation of 300, and at night the building was filled by at least 500 people. Our own people were amazed; and when it was seen that the collections had more than doubled, even the circuit stewards were converted. *We never went back to the little church*, but here for eighteen months forgathered for worship; and in that hall many signs and wonders were wrought.

Ere long the question of a new church was mooted, but with little hope of success, until, as in the case of Warwick, the Lord took the matter into His own hands, and by a gracious and wonderful visitation of the Holy Spirit a blessed revival swept the town; and as the immediate result of that revival our present lordly church was built. In every sense that was a remarkable spiritual movement. It represented Toowoomba's first baptism of fire. Spontaneous in its outbreak; natural, though rapid, in its development, its results were abiding. On my study-table there lies before me a list of 135 persons who, within a few short days, were brought to God. I read that list to-day with a strange thrill of gladness. It contains the names of leading men and women of the town, who later on became buttresses of the church. Every section of the Church was enriched. Our own membership was increased almost threefold, and at once Methodism took its stand as one of the leading forces of the Darling Downs.

The work began, where all genuine revivals should begin, within the church itself. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the infant Church, and then followed the gathering in, under one sermon, of 3,000 converts. It has ever been thus. Would that, at this writing, I could reach the ear of every minister and every church member in Australia, and elsewhere! It would be with an earnest cry for the Church itself to awake and put on its strength. It would pay us a magnificent dividend to cease for one twelve months all our aggressive evangelistic agencies, and to give ourselves to the one task of bringing back the Church itself on to Apostolic lines. No wonder that failure has so often to be written across our evangelistic efforts! With the Church itself formal and self-contained, we lack the foundation elements of successful evangelism. In Toowoomba the work began silently, slowly, amongst our own

people. No special missionary was invited ; no unusual efforts were put forth to awaken public interest. The work grew from within, and a fire was gradually kindled that went on burning in connexion with the ordinary ministries of the church.

I always think with gratitude of 'one case that' at the time gave me special joy. It was that of a humble servant-maid, named Rhoda Bidgood, who at one of the services was deeply convinced of sin. With streaming face she cried to God for salvation, but no light came. 'Go home,' I said to her, 'and upon your knees to-night read the third chapter of John.' In the middle of the night that girl wrestled in prayer ; at last, whilst, by her bedside, reading that *vade mecum* of the soul, the light of God flashed into her heart. A hundred times since, on platform and in pulpit, I have spoken of that girl. Without the slightest approach to ostentation she set to work to lead her friends to Christ. Her home was at a rough and primitive settlement among the mountains, thirty miles away. At once she went to her people to tell them what great things the Lord had done for her. Within a week she had won her mother for Christ. Soon a work broke out amongst her farmer neighbours. One of the leading men of the district told me the following story : 'One day Rhoda came to my house to tell me how anxious she was that the children of the settlement should be gathered into a Sunday school. With strange tenderness she pleaded with me to become its superintendent. I refused, as well I might, for I was not a Christian. But Rhoda had not long left my house ere I found myself kneeling behind a log in one of my paddocks, crying to God for mercy. Soon, thank God, I found the pearl of great price.' That school was at once started, its newly converted superintendent became a local preacher, and within six months nearly one half the residents of that settlement had made profession of Christ, and this in a place that I had regularly visited, where I had conducted many services, but had never seen the slightest movement amongst the people. Truly 'a little child shall lead them.'

Now the scheme for a new church was taken up with enthusiasm. The difficulty was as to a site on which to build. There was one block of two acres, right in the

middle of the town, held by the Government on which to build public offices. Many of the moneyed men of the Downs had looked upon that block with envious eyes. It was mentioned at a trustee-meeting. At first we were hopeless, but after prayer we resolved to try. Our senior circuit steward, who for some years represented the district in the State Parliament, set to work with the authorities. All opposition was silenced, and the Government agreed to put up the block to auction at the upset price of £550. Now came our real difficulty. There were several well-to-do squatters and others who desired those two acres, and were able to outbid us in price. 'I suggest,' said our circuit steward at a meeting of trustees, 'that Mr. Taylor put on his biggest white tie, that he take up his stand right at the front of the auctioneer, that he get in with a first bid of £550, and that, looking the crowd in the face, he adds, "And I want it for a church."' That was literally what was done. Not a man dare bid against 'that wretched parson,' and the block was knocked down to us for the upset price. To-day that site is worth thousands of pounds, facing two leading streets. With its fine church, capacious schools, and comfortable parsonage, it comprises one of the most valuable properties owned by our Church in Queensland.

With all speed plans were prepared, and on Tuesday, August 14, 1877, the foundation-stone was laid by His Excellency Sir Arthur E. Kennedy, K.C.M.G., C.B., &c., the Queensland representative of our beloved Queen Victoria. Never had Methodism in Queensland witnessed such a day. In addition to the Governor and his daughter the occasion was graced by the presence of Earl Jersey, Governor of the State of South Australia, and by Colonel Scratchley, the Administrator of British New Guinea. Almost the entire district turned out. Corner-stones were laid by Mrs. James Taylor, wife of 'the King of Toowoomba,' Mrs. Robert Aland, wife of our senior circuit steward, Mrs. John S. Turner, wife of the Hon. J. S. Turner, M.L.C., and by Mrs. W. Graham, daughter of that saintly pioneer missionary, the Rev. Nathaniel Turner. The Chairman of the Queensland District—now the Hon. F. T. Brentnall, M.L.C.—delivered an official address. Such a tea and public meeting followed as Queensland had probably never known.

As may be supposed, that scheme—so bold and so expensive in view of the character of our membership—entailed a large amount of labour upon the superintendent. I travelled thousands of miles in its interest. One journey of nearly 400 miles in the saddle can never be forgotten. It occupied a fortnight, and was a veritable begging expedition. Personally I canvassed the town and district for many miles around. People of all creeds and of no creed helped us ; and when, a few months later, the church was opened, we were able to make the following statement : The entire scheme cost £3,200, and the church opened with a debt of £1,000 upon it, which amount might easily have been wiped out during the following few years, but was permitted to stand ‘ for a future generation to deal with ’—a policy, so far as our Church is concerned, wrong in itself, and generally disastrous in its results..

Not long was I permitted to enjoy the fruits of our labours here, as within a few months my three years were at an end, and the Methodist policeman—our august Conference—ordered us to ‘ move on.’ During our happy years in Toowoomba our daughter Mary Robey was born to us, the first Methodist preacher’s baby born in the city. The pains and penalties of the itinerant system galled our flesh deeply. We loved our work, souls were being saved, financially the circuit was prosperous, and we were surrounded by friends connected with every Church. But, from the Methodist standpoint, our work was done ; and so with a big effort we girded the loins of our mind, and tore ourselves away from a sphere of labour which my wife and I still look upon as one of the happiest of our life.

X

NEW SOUTH WALES SPHERES: GRACIOUS REVIVAL RECORDS

A dismal journey—New district in the making—A perilous sail—
Unique baptism service—Stingy Christians—Revival outburst
—A hundred and eighty converts—Threatened break-down—
First, the spiritual, afterwards that which is material—Taree
new church—A divine plan—Jabez Bunting Waterhouse—
Conversions weekly—Father Boyce—Mother called home—
Unexpected removal.

THERE are times in the experience of most Methodist preachers when their loyalty to our itinerant system is subjected to considerable strain. I had now reached one such stage. Under date April 23, 1879, the following entry occurs in my journal: 'A mysterious providence brings us to this (Manning River) district. I had been invited to four circuits, Maryborough, Townsville, Orange, and Wesley Church, Sydney. I accepted the last, and anticipated a happy term in what is considered one of the finest spheres in that city. But it was not to be. A senior and honoured missionary returning to the Home work must have a city circuit, and "Wesley" is the only one available. My name then appears down for Stanmore, a new place in the Newtown Circuit, only to be altered at the last reading; a telegram reaching me, "Down for Manning River." I confess to a feeling of disappointment, but to-day I see the hand of God in the whole arrangement.'

An English minister may grumble less at the character of his 'move' when he learns a little of the inconveniences of the itinerant system in 'this land of magnificent distances.' My wife, three little children, and I left Toowoomba on April 2, reaching Taree—our new home—exactly three weeks afterwards. Our luggage was subjected to seven separate handlings, whilst we, poor things, were tossed

about from pillar to post, 'A time of anxiety, and at one period of some danger,' as my journal puts it; a hundred miles by train, delay in Brisbane, waiting for our steamer, then several days of misery as the old *Elemang* tore her way through 500 miles of furious storm, the worst the captain had ever experienced on this coast. At times we were in danger of foundering. Owing to the continued roughness of the sea we were detained in Sydney for over a week, and ultimately started on our last lap on board a wretched little cockle-boat named the *Diamentina*. What we suffered must not be told here. But after three weeks of buffeting we reached our new circuit.

'Rain, rain, rain,' so says my journal, 'for the first month. There are fourteen places in this circuit, covering an area as broad and wide as an English county. I have no colleague, not even a circuit missionary, and but half-a-dozen local preachers. The circuit spiritually in a very sad way; can see an enormous amount of work ahead among the 6,000 people living on this river. The whole district teems with young men and women. Oh for a copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit! We have had a special circuit-meeting from which arrangements have matured for a spiritual advance movement. I am trying to live for a revival.'

I am anxious to tell you of that revival; but first a chat about my circuit. Coopernook, my famous circuit horse, was a treasure to me. He and I seemed glued together, as during those three years we companioned almost day and night. Many thousands of miles that horse carried me, for where to-day there are splendid coach roads, in my time we had but bridle-tracks, and the saddle was my throne. But I forget my circuit boat, that instrument of torture that meant so much of arduous toil in order to reach distant river appointments. Once I purchased a sail, thinking to lighten my toil. But that sail well-nigh cost me my life. Knowing as little about sailing craft as an English reader knows about buck-jumpers, I one morning hoisted my sail, and started ten miles down the river for my work next day. Scarcely had I got under weigh when up sprung one of our strong westerly winds, which sent my boat flying down stream. I ought instantly to have hauled in my sail, *but I did not know how*, and onwards I rushed, with the boiling waters hissing all around me, as if anxious to punish me for my

temerity. I simply went flying past the wharf at Croki, whither I was bound, and should have been driven out to sea but that hereabouts there was a big bend in the river, which brought me head on to the wind ; and therein lay my salvation.

Everything in those days was primitive. The farmers were heroically facing their early struggles. Many of the homes were of the humblest ; the parsonage itself was a ramshackle place, damp to the point of danger. We were 120 miles away from the nearest doctor. Once, when our eldest boy, only six years of age, was threatened with a serious illness, I had to take him in an open buggy all that weary journey to Maitland, occupying six days going and returning. There was one place I visited about once a month, to reach which meant over twenty miles of saddle work through thick forest, followed by eighteen miles of hard pulling in a rowing-boat. I had an amusing experience at the end of one of these journeys. I had returned from that wearying trip—forty miles in the saddle and thirty-six in a rowing-boat, with three services and the summer's sun doing its best to prostrate both man and horse. Tired out as I was, I had again to mount my faithful friend for a service eight miles down the river. How I got through that service I do not know. After the sermon there was a baby to be baptized. With parents and friends standing before me I droned through the baptism service, and when I got to the end pronounced the Benediction, and sat down. But the people still stood. Surprised, I innocently asked, 'What is the matter? Why don't you go home?' 'But, Mr. Taylor,' said the father, 'you haven't baptized the baby.' 'What do you mean?' I drowsily asked. 'Why, haven't I just read the whole service?' 'Yes, sir,' said the young father, with a look of pity on his face, 'but really you haven't baptized the baby.' And it was even so. My poor muddled brain and tired body were at their last point of endurance. I gave a tired laugh as the truth dawned upon me, sprinkled that bairnie in the name of the Holy Trinity, and mounted poor old Cooperbrook for that weary, weary eight miles home.

In one part of my circuit I had a very heavy cross to carry. Many of the settlers had been farm-labourers in

the old country. One such told me how in Berkshire he had brought up a family of fourteen, and had never received more than from eight to ten shillings per week. 'Such was our poverty,' said he, 'that we were only able to buy half an ounce of tea once a fortnight as a great luxury.' Many such had emigrated to Australia, and quite a number had settled in this district. My trouble with not a few of them was to get them to realize their responsibility to support the ordinances of religion. Though their circumstances had vastly improved, their giving continued that of their earlier days. Stingy Christians! Yes, I have met with many of them, there and elsewhere; and they have always been to me as the irritating presence of a thorn in one's side. In one place the nine collections for a quarter amounted to 14s. 6d. The congregations numbered 150, and there were forty members of the church. Thank God, a spiritual revival altered all that, and soon £20 averaged their contributions to the Quarterly Meeting. I was preaching one hot Sunday afternoon in another place to a congregation of eighty, mostly fairly well-to-do farmers and their families. The collection amounted to eighteenpence. Possibly the heat of the day had affected my nerves. Anyway, when I saw the contents of that plate on the table before me, I leaned over the pulpit and went for those people for all I was worth.

The sacramental service followed. As was my wont, I put a shilling upon the plate for the poor fund. The steward took it round the church, and brought it back without a single coin to keep my poor shilling company. And yet at the Quarterly Meeting a month afterwards the steward said to me, rubbing his hands with delight, 'My word, Mr. Taylor, your talk the other Sunday has done a lot of good; the *collection yesterday was four shillings.*'

One of my predecessors had a still funnier experience. The weather was intensely hot; the good man had ridden many miles, and was suffering from a bilious headache. After his sermon he announced the collection. There were over a hundred people present. My friend watched the steward go all down one side of the church, only receiving one threepenny-bit. Whether it was that the old Adam temporarily got possession of him, or whether it came as an inspiration from above, I know not, but the good man

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jumped to his feet and, leaning his long body over the reading-desk, cried out, ' Brother B., bring that plate back ; don't trouble them on the other side of the church.' Probably that style of rebuke was more effective than my scolding of that other congregation.

Within three months of our arrival in the circuit everything pointed to the speedy coming of a time of spiritual quickening. Much prayer was made to God by the faithful few, and soon we welcomed the droppings of a shower. Arrangements were carefully matured for ' a protracted meeting,' and for nearly a fortnight meetings for prayer and others for preaching were held. My journal will give details of this, the most remarkable work of God that had ever been witnessed in that river district :

' *Sunday, May 25, 1879.*—After making prudential preparations we this day commence a series of special services. Our hope is in the God of Israel. For want of room in the church I preached at night in the Protestant Hall, the largest building in the district. The place was crowded, and there were two decisions. The spirit of expectancy is abroad. . . . *Monday.*—Church full. Text, Luke ix. 61. Nine persons came forward as seekers. *Tuesday.*—Mothers' Meeting at three. Hard conflict at night meeting. Church crowded. A glorious victory. Five persons went home rejoicing in their Saviour. *Wednesday.*—Children's service at three. At night preached on " Saving Faith." Seven persons professed faith in Christ as their Saviour. *Thursday.*—A glorious meeting ! Never nearer heaven. Church crammed with people ; and, better still, filled with the glory of God. Text, 2 Cor. vi. 2. Thirty-two persons rose asking for the prayers of the congregation. Nearly all found the blessing of forgiveness. The interest deepens as we advance. The entire town is moved. *Friday.*—Another victory. Preached from Rev. iii. 20. Seven souls slain and brought into the new life, amongst them an old man of seventy and an ex-local preacher. *Sunday.*—Three services. At night the most remarkable meeting ever held in the town ; the large hall packed, and many standing outside. Six found peace. *Monday.*—One seeker. Church full. Had unusual liberty speaking from Luke xv. 10. But it is easy to preach when one is surrounded by men of faith. *Tuesday.*—To-night

I sang the gospel to the packed congregation. A time never to be forgotten. At times our voices could scarcely be heard; suppressed sobs, and cries of "Glory!" were heard all around. Five persons came forward seeking Christ. One had ridden fifteen miles on purpose to give his heart to God. *Thursday*.—Fellowship meeting. Between thirty and forty new converts spoke, sweetly and pointedly. Gave an address of encouragement to the eighty or ninety who during these meetings had professed conversion, and then six others came forward literally yearning for liberty. The poor body suffers, but, oh, I am happy! Tell me, is there any luxury in this world equal to that of pointing sinners to Christ?'

Thus commenced a genuine work that soon spread to other parts of the circuit, and ere long we were able to record the names of 180 persons who during this gracious visitation had yielded themselves to God. I was kept hard at work almost night and day. With no help from outside, my strength began to give out. My journal begins to tell of weariness and much pain, of difficulty in reaching home from distant appointments, &c.; but I simply had to keep going and at high pressure, the result being that the whole circuit was soon raised to a higher level, the membership more than doubled, finances lifted out of the bog, new congregations started, and three new churches erected. I confess that after all these years I read with devout gratitude the record of advance lying before me, knowing as I do what the circuit was and what it became, *absolutely as the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit*. During those three years the circuit raised for all purposes the sum of £2,355, and the membership was considerably more than doubled. I preached 463 sermons, conducted 350 class-meetings, baptized 130 children, and travelled, mostly on horseback or by rowing-boat, nearly 15,000 miles. In this circuit our son Thomas Manning was born. To-day he is in the Methodist ministry, and I have just received a letter from him stating that on Sunday last, when preaching in his church at Goulburn, he had four conversions. That is the kind of news that gladdens a father's heart.

Before saying farewell to the Manning River I venture to emphasize the remark previously made that more than

ever I believe to-day that the Church's short cut to financial strength and to general material prosperity is to be found along the line of spiritual power and blessing. To run a church successfully that is spiritually dead is like making bricks without straw ; but given a church throbbing with spiritual life, and you may dare great things for God. The beautiful church standing to-day on probably the finest site in Taree furnishes another illustration of the truth of this. But for the remarkable revival throughout that circuit such a church building would have been an impossibility. From start to finish it was a distinct work of the Holy Spirit. By many even of our own people our proposals were considered to be quixotic. To erect a church capable of seating more than one half the population might well cause even strong and godly men to pause. But men's hearts were warm with the fires of revival, and the church simply had to be. At the inaugural meeting £530 was promised, and when, in March of 1881, the Rev. Charles Olden conducted the dedicatory services, it was found that the entire cost of £1,360 had been raised within £150. The major portion of this sum had naturally to be secured by the minister, and I wish to mention a remarkable fact, illustrating as it does the widespread influence of the revival, that I scarcely met with one refusal to my request for a subscription, although people in all parts of the district, and connected with every section of the Church, were waited upon. The church stands to-day the finest building of its kind in that part of the State. In these times it could not have been built for less than double what it actually cost us. There it stands, an eloquent testimony to the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit, working within the hearts of His own people, and employing them as willing agents in the spreading of His evangel among the unsaved.

After the experiences connected with our removal from Toowoomba to the Manning River, I was led to renew an old resolution never again to accept a circuit invitation, but to leave myself absolutely at the disposal of the Conference. As the time approached for us to leave the Manning River, a sheaf of tempting invitations reached us. All were declined, and at the ' third reading of stations ' I found my name down for the Glebe Circuit, Sydney, where we arrived in the middle of April, 1882.

Two happy years were spent in that populous suburb, the very antithesis of the wide district we had left behind us. I have just been reading with swelling heart the records of those two years of blessed revival and of consequent church development. At this moment I feel my pen to drag; a strange feeling possesses me. As rarely before through all these seventy years, I seem to-day to discover a plan in my life, a plan never designed by myself, but all pointing to a divine leading. I tremble as I feel impelled thus to place upon paper the ever-deepening convictions that God's design in calling me into this ministry was that my life-story should point, with constantly added emphasis, to that central teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, '*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*' And, as the perusal of these pages will testify, in each sphere of service God has been pleased to direct my imperfect efforts to point to this much-neglected scriptural fact, that the one way to secure material success in the Church of God is to put the spiritual where it always ought to be, right out in the front of everything. I am humbled this day as I am led to see how along this line the gracious Spirit has been pleased to direct me, one of the least worthy of His children. In Brisbane and Warwick, in Toowoomba and on the Manning River, in each case it has been the same—a gracious spiritual revival, manifestly, in every case, the work of the Spirit of God, preparing the way for permanent material advancement such as could never have been but for this wonderful leading of the Holy Ghost. When will our beloved Methodism, when will the Church of God generally, awake to this paramount fact? We are too often found making a serious mistake—creating machinery vast and varied, but not obtaining the necessary power with which to run it; putting more energy into the erection of elaborate ecclesiastical scaffolding than we are into the infinitely more important work of building the spiritual temple. This, as it seems to me, is the crying weakness of all our church systems to-day. And hence we fail; in all essential points we fail to win a redeemed world for our Lord and His Christ.

We found the Glebe officials anxious about the condition and prospects of the circuit. One of Australia's

noblest servants, and one of Methodism's most honoured sons, the Rev. Jabez Bunting Waterhouse, was here closing the years of his remarkable ministry. The one-time champion Conference debater, a master of the affairs of our great Connexional system, who had held its highest offices, and rendered distinguished service in the shaping of its policy, was now an old man. Serious and protracted illness supervened upon his appointment to the Glebe, and naturally the circuit suffered. But we found a loyal albeit an anxious people awaiting us. The exigencies of the situation drove us to constant prayer, and soon we were permitted to see a glimmering of light in the midst of much darkness.

At the end of the first year the officials published a report of the progress of the church during those twelve months of happy service. 'It is a joy to us,' states the report, 'to be able to record that the church life of the past twelve months has been marked by unbroken unity, by much of fervour, and by gratifying expansion. The list of membership has steadily increased, the names of 96 new members having been added to the roll. Thirty-five young persons have joined a Junior Society-class. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in meeting the demands of such as wish to become seatholders. Arrangements are being matured for adding galleries to the church. The Sunday school has increased from 268 to 380 scholars. During the year a Circuit missionary has been engaged. Twenty-eight of the ladies of the congregation have given themselves to district visiting work. A Ladies' Benevolent Association has been formed, as also a vigorous Temperance Society. The Juvenile Missionary Society has, during the year, been reorganized, the members bringing in an average of £2 per week for our Home and Foreign Missions. A Young Men's Society has been founded, 84 members having been enrolled. The most gratifying feature of the year's work is the remarkable blessing that came to the circuit through the holding, by our minister, of a series of evangelistic mission services. Within a fortnight over 100 persons professed conversion. These services were followed by a united evangelistic mission, in which the ministers of all the local churches took part, when many more were brought to God.'

The good work thus reported continued throughout our second year. The Conference decided to send me a probationer colleague, who shortly afterwards arrived from Didsbury College, England, in the person of the Rev. Thomas B. Holmes, who still lives to render valuable service to the Church. Financially the circuit prospered. A public building was purchased at Camperdown, and made into a comfortable place of worship. The proposed new galleries in the Glebe Church were erected, and were regularly filled with people.

I remember the Rev. Luke H. Wiseman, M.A., once saying that the most satisfactory revival he had ever known broke out on his first Sunday night in a circuit to which he had been appointed, and continued steadily every Sunday for the three years he was there : no outside help, no special missions, but a natural and constant inflow into the kingdom of God. It was largely thus at the Glebe. Rarely a week passed without conversions. The records of that work lie before me, and afford me the keenest joy as I think of the after-life of many of the converts. The first name is that of a minister's daughter, to-day the wife of a leading English layman, superintendent of one of the largest Methodist Sunday schools in the Homeland, and frequently appointed representative to the British Conference. Another is to-day proprietor of one of the leading ladies' boarding-schools of the State. A third is one of our most honoured local preachers and president of our L.P. Association. The names of our two eldest children find a place in that list. Several were children of the manse, some of whom have since rendered excellent service in our own or other churches, and quite a number became useful laymen of the church.

One of our churches stood in the private park of the late Sir G. Wigram Allen, K.C.M.G., Speaker of our Legislative Assembly, one of the handsomest men I have ever known, a prominent lawyer, an able statesman, a loyal Methodist. Sir Wigram always conducted the earlier part of the Sunday-morning service, the sermon being delivered by the circuit ministers or by his distinguished brother-in-law, the venerable William B. Boyce, for long the official representative of the British Wesleyan Conference and the President of the first

Australasian Conference, held in the year 1855. 'Father Boyce, as it was our joy to call him, was living in his own beautiful home near to the Toxteth Park Gates, busy among his books and his manuscripts. It was at this time he published his two books, *Introduction to the Study of History* and *The Higher Criticism and the Bible*. Once each Sunday he occupied one of our pulpits, facetiously calling himself my 'young man.' What a privilege it was to sit at this quaint, wise, saintly old man's feet—the type of man one rarely meets with nowadays! My Toxteth class was a meeting of unique character. Amongst my members was dear old Mrs. Allen, widow of that noble old Trojan, the Honourable George Allen, M.L.C., who presided at the first annual meeting of our Australian Missionary Society—a man rugged in manner, but genuine and tender of heart, and thoroughly loyal to his Church. Mrs. Allen was one of our Lord's choicest saints, probably the last link that connected us with the introduction of Methodism into Australia. I remember her telling us how she stood by the side of her mother in the old house which still stands in Princes Street to assist in bidding welcome to the young missionary, the Rev. Samuel Leigh, upon his arrival on August 15, 1815. Mrs. W. B. Boyce, who has only recently passed away, was another of my members, as was Lady Allen, wife of Sir Wigram. The class-meeting in those days was the very backbone of our church. In the circumscribed area of the Glebe Circuit eleven classes met weekly, contributing in old-fashioned class money some £40 per quarter.

During our stay in this circuit our daughters Annie and Polly were born. Here the sad news reached us of the sudden translation of my honoured mother, who was called to exchange mortality for life on the morning of October 29, 1882, at 'Willow House,' Hull, aged sixty-nine years. The letter, written by my brother in Hull, that brought the sad news now lies before me. Elsewhere I have written of my mother, one of God's noble women, the most unselfish woman I have known, who without ostentation gave of her best—gave, indeed, her all to God. The older I grow, the more do I realize how much I owe to her dear and sacred memory.

Quite unexpectedly, and much against my own judge-

ment and that of our people, we were removed from the Glebe in April, 1884, to take charge of York Street Circuit, of which I have much to write later on. The removal was a painful one. We were happy in our sphere of service. The work was steadily growing. The Circuit church was filled with a united and earnest people. But Conference spoke, and we had to submit. At the time we followed in the dark, and, I fear, somewhat in the spirit of rebellion, what has since been clearly revealed to be the unerring leading of our heavenly Father.

PART II

XI

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A MISSION

'The Forward Movement'—What is it?—The making of a mission—Like Topsy, it grew—York Street's palmy days—Sad decay—The 1883 experiment—Conference of 1884—A big fight—The Rev. F. C. Boyer—The pioneer C.M.M.—The mission's name—Its motto—First year's struggle—'Foredoomed to failure'—*Infra dig.*—A year's fight with infidels—Victory slow, but glorious—Extracts from journal—Converts every week—*Résumé* of later developments.

ELSEWHERE I have written at length on 'The Forward Movement in Australia,'¹ a story of origins and of phenomenal developments. There lives not the Methodist who is not to-day profoundly thankful to God for that movement. In Great Britain and in these southern lands alike we have felt in it the throb of a heart that was divine. It came to us in the hour of our deepest need. It was the challenge of the King of kings to a Church that was losing its grip. And right nobly London and Manchester, Liverpool and Hull, Edinburgh and Belfast, Sydney and Melbourne, responded to that challenge. Is not the story of its successes already embalmed in the Church's archives? And is not Christianity to-day a sweeter, more virile thing because of its coming?

But there must be no boasting. The necessity for such a movement is the confession of the Church's unfaithfulness. Why has there not always been amongst us a moving forward? The story of the Church's backsliding is sad reading. Frankly, therein lies the explanation of our empty city churches and our many depressing problems, in city and in country alike. It is trifling to talk of altered environment, of the rising up of new problems, and the like. We have failed, where all Churches have failed, through weakness at the heart. Those big city churches

¹ See *A Century in the Pacific*, pp. 687-706.

were built because they were necessary. They succeeded because the evangel proclaimed in them was that of Apostolic and of early Methodist Christianity. The 'God's message' that filled those places with converted men could surely keep them full. To doubt this is to put the Church upon the horns of an insoluble dilemma. The fact is that fifty years ago Methodism was presenting to the world a counterpart to our Lord's picture of the early Ephesian Church. It had, to a painful degree, left its first love. The fires of an evangelism that had swept England from end to end, and had saved it from political chaos, were being silently choked by respectable formalism. The material was slowly slaying the spiritual. That was the one fact that stood at the back of 'The Forward Movement.' Godly men trembled, some of them grumbled, but the best of them shook themselves from a lethargy that was atrophying the Church, and 'The Forward Movement' was the result.

From various quarters I have been urged to write in detail the history of this movement as illustrated in the birth and growth of what is now everywhere known as the Sydney 'Central Methodist Mission.' Frankly, the task is a difficult one; the story has so many sides, and the personal element is difficult of elimination. The 'C.M.M.' was born in storm, and fought its infant way through many difficulties. First, it allayed opposition, then it commanded respect, and ultimately gained the confidence of the Church and of the community, and to-day it stands forth, to quote from one of our leading dailies, as 'the leading aggressive religious movement of the Southern World.'

I am asked to write on 'The Making of a *Mission*.' Honestly, I like not the term. I know that the word, in its application to forward movement developments in Australia, originated with the Sydney C.M.M. Still, it has more than fulfilled its original purpose, and should now—like many another good thing—be permitted quietly to pass away. Instead, I find that it is being adopted by many foolish enough to imagine that there is a talismanic charm about the word; only call a decaying church a mission, forsooth, and decay will thereby be transformed into advance. All through these years I have never ceased

to emphasize the fact that the C.M.M. stands for a church, as truly so as is the congregation worshipping in Rome's great Basilica, or that under the dome of London's St. Paul's. I frankly confess that I should like to see in all similar agencies this word 'mission' dropped. Every mission ought to be a church, as every church is, or should be, a mission. Hence, as I tell my story, I beg my readers to feel with me that I am talking about a true branch of the living Apostolic Church, born on the day of Pentecost, with Jesus Christ as its one and only Head, its ministers shepherds of the sacramental hosts born for heaven within its doors, and every member thereof a living unit, a limb of the body, a part of the Christ of God.

'The *Making* of a Mission!' The fact is, the C.M.M. was never 'made,' in the sense in which a house, a book, a garden are made. There was no plan, no intention, in its conception other than just the desire to follow whither *He* should lead. I have stood at the source of a mighty river, away up amid the massive grandeur of the mountain's slope. There, in the midst of boulders and bracken and mountain flowers, from out the mouth of some forbidding gorge steals a tiny streamlet. It has no programme, no purpose; it asks no questions. It must needs go where it may, and so down the mountain it meanders, checked by many an obstacle, but making for itself a way by the operation of the relentless law of necessity that forces it downward. Gaining impetus, and absorbing many another streamlet as it descends, gradually it widens and deepens until it becomes the draining centre of a province, supplying living water for tribes of people upon its banks, and, ere it expires in the bosom of Mother Ocean, providing a safe harbour for the commercial navies of many a distant land.

It has been thus with the origin and progress of the Sydney C.M.M. 'When at first the work began, small and feeble was its day.' There, right in the heart of one of the greatest cities of the Empire, stood the cathedral of Australasian Methodism, 'Old York Street,' as dear to the heart of the Methodists of the Southern World as 'City Road' is to our people of the Homeland. Built as the outcome of the Centenary Movement of 1839, there it stood, a massive structure of stone, with its colonnade of Corinthian

pillars, its imposing sweep of steps, its solid cedar pulpit and pews, its noted organ, its general air of superior respectability. Orators filled its pulpit; its pews were crowded by the strength of Sydney Methodism. Carriages were at its doors; the young filled its schoolrooms, and saints of God its class-meetings. Yes, and there were conversions, many and oft, in those palmy days. Its walls resounded to the joyous noise of old-fashioned revivals. Here the first Australasian Conferences held their historic sessions. Here were born our great Foreign and Home Missionary agencies. Our educational schemes and our ventures in literature here first saw the light; and from its living, throbbing membership hundreds went to swell the throngs of the Church Triumphant.

Thus it was for a quarter of a century and more. Gradually a cloud, at first little as a human hand, settled upon the historic pile. Disintegrating forces began to operate; the seductive call of the suburbs reached the centre. Little by little the people left, and established many a Methodist cause outside the boundary of the city. There still stood 'dear old York Street,' but denuded of its crowds, robbed of its strength. An atmosphere of depression settled upon the place; the outside masses were not attracted by the oratory of its preachers; methods at one time successful now entirely failed; the official Board discouraged to the point of desertion, trust properties in a state of decay and burdened with debt, the preacher facing an array of emptiness, and the Conference in despair. Such was the picture!

At the Conference of 1883, at the suggestion of one of its prominent laymen, it was resolved to try an experiment. A so-called 'topical' preacher was appointed—'sensational' would be the better word. This proved to be the bitterest drop in our cup of humiliation. The poor man filled the church within a month, and emptied it before the next Conference, when he was subjected to discipline, and retired from our ranks.

It was under this cloud that the Conference met on January 22, 1884, in the building thus rendered desolate. A Trojan of the Church, the beloved Joseph H. Fletcher, sat in the chair. He was surrounded by giants of his own order: James Watkin and George Hurst, Jabez Bunting

Waterhouse and William Clarke, William Kelynack and George Woolnough, George Martin and George Brown, Richard Sellors and James Egan Moulton. These, and many another—men with iron in their blood and fire in their souls—faced their silver-tongued President, as with 'a tear in his voice' he propounded the question, 'What shall we do with this, our Conference Church?' Behind that question there were heaped the discussions and arguments, the hopes and prayers, of nearly a decade of years. No wonder that to-day, with the crash of recent disaster ringing in its ears, the Conference should meet the question with the cry, 'Sell it, sell it, and let us build other churches in the suburbs with the money.'

Thank God, the hour and the inspiration at last had come, and come in the very nick of time. That Nestor of the Conference, George Hurst, a rugged old conservative of the school of the renowned Dr. George Osborn, of the Homeland, sprang to his feet, crying out in righteous anger, 'Sell it, sell it? Never, God helping us, never!' At this distant hour I still seem to see that stalwart of the Church with his rough white head, his deep-set eyes all but covered by shaggy eyebrows. With arm outstretched and voice thrilled with a pathos and a penetration that were irresistible, the grand old man pleaded for yet another attempt to save alike our historic pile and our Connexional honour. That speech saved the Conference from an act that would have brought shame upon our Church for many a day to come.

'But what do you propose?' asked a brother from the floor.

'Brethren,' answered the G.O.M.—and a peculiar hush settled upon the place—'is Methodism bankrupt? Have we quite lost our historic evangelistic fervour? Have we no men among us of the old school—revivalists, evangelists, missionaries—call them what you will—one of whom can be put in charge of the old place?'

I was seated in a quiet corner of a distant pew, too young to take much part in the councils of the Church, but listening with eager interest to every word that was being spoken. Judge of my astonishment when a brother rose and suggested my name. At that time I was at work in the Glebe Circuit, in the midst of a blessed revival, busy

with church enlargement schemes, but in indifferent health. When, after my first discomfiture, I found the suggestion receiving favour by many of the brethren, I suffered from the utmost disquietude. Immediately the advice of my medical adviser was sought, his decision being that were I to come to York Street I could not stand the strain for six months.

Armed with the doctor's certificate, I, at a later session, pleaded to be allowed to remain at the Glebe. A numerous signed petition came from the circuit, strengthened by an official letter from the circuit steward, closing with these gruesome words: 'If you appoint Mr. Taylor, pray order his coffin, for he will be bound to need it within a few months.' After more than thirty years one can afford to smile at all this. The final vote was taken, and, in spite of protest, medical and otherwise, my name was placed in the vacant space opposite 'York Street.'

A scene followed that even yet I find it difficult to chronicle. Immediately upon the vote being recorded, Dr. Kelynack stepped from the platform and, taking my hand, said, 'Well, Taylor, you have made your protest. The Conference thinks otherwise. Now try to take this vote as the call of God to you.'

Then George Hurst again rose, and in a voice full of pleading said, 'We have appointed a man to this difficult post. For God's sake let us assure him of our support. We must stand at his back. I hope he will be trammelled by no resolutions, and in no way bound by red-tape. If he wants to kick out the panels of the pulpit, let him kick them out. Let us promise him a free hand to experiment as he may wish in the interests of God's work.'

The personal words of the President may never be forgotten: 'Taylor, from my heart I sympathize with you; yours is indeed a difficult task. I will promise you my help. Come and let us interview your circuit steward.'

Our reception was of the coolest. The good old man was angry. 'The Conference has made a mistake. We have tried everything, and have failed. The building ought to have been sold. Personally I accept no responsibility. If Mr. Taylor can get his bread-and-butter, well and good; if not, he will have to go without it.'

It only remains to be added that before the Conference discussion closed it was understood that I was allowed to choose my own junior colleague. I immediately mentioned the name of Frederick C. Boyer, who, twelve months previously, was one of a band of eleven who came out to the New South Wales Conference from an English college. I may here add that with all his characteristic fervour Mr. Boyer threw himself into the front firing-line. For twelve months he was in labours more abundant, seizing every opportunity, in sympathy with every suggested move forward, and successful in pointing many anxious souls to the Saviour of men.

Remember, all this took place before the days of Central Missions; before Hugh Price Hughes had coined that inspirational phrase 'The Forward Movement'; hence the difficulties of the situation will be the better understood. We had no precedents to guide us, no records of success elsewhere to inspire us. We were in the dark. No money, no official Board, a congregation of fifty, a membership of eighteen, trust properties burdened—such was our stock-in-trade at the start.

The two months that followed were months of soul-conflict, of worrying temptation. I began to understand the meaning of Gethsemane. At length the crisis was reached, and what I always speak of as the Waterloo of my life was fought. Pacing up and down my little study one day, with the cry upon my lips, 'What shall I do?' my eye happened (?) on a Scripture text. There right before me I read the words of David, the great Jewish king, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God.' I read again, and still again, and, falling upon my knees, immediately experienced a strange and blessed calm. The winter of my poor doubting was gone, and Hope leaped to her proper place in the soul, with the cheery words, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' May I say it, say it reverently and truly, '*In the strength of that great Scripture this C.M.M. has, stone by stone, been built up through all these years*'?

For two things I had prayed during those days of waiting. We were to start a new work, on unknown lines, with no sidelights from other lands to guide us. What name should we give to the new venture? Like a flash there

one day came to me the designation by which the work has come to be so widely known :

‘THE CENTRAL METHODIST MISSION.’

This was in 1884, a year antecedent to the beginning by Peter Thompson of the first of the English Missions, two years before the starting by Mr. Collier of that at Manchester, and three before Mr. Hughes commenced in the West of London. On both sides of the world the same words were chosen with which to designate the movement, and to-day the familiar letters ‘C.M.M.’ everywhere describe the kind of institutional and evangelistic work by which, in ever-varying forms, the great missions of Britain, of Australia, and of New Zealand are characterized.

Knowing full well the influence that often gathers round the choice of a working watchword, I sought in much prayer to be guided to some sentence that might be made the spiritual rally-cry of our people. Every army has its war song, every regiment its watchword. The heraldic mottoes upon a family’s coat of arms have always been that family’s boast. Every cult must nowadays possess its distinctive call, every college its boasted motto. And so, realizing, as I had at last come to do, that we stood at the birth of a new work of God, whose influence might possibly be widespread, I sought for a watchword—a sentence to be flung at the head of the devil in our times of discouragement, to be placed in the hand of every convert, to be emblazoned on our banners, and quoted at our rallying centre. It came, suddenly, like a flash, at the conclusion of my first service in the old church. My text had been ‘Christ in you the hope of glory.’ A history-making hour that! My diary furnishes the stirring details. On the spot where for years past there had been barrenness, to-night a wave of blessing swept over us. The infant work received its baptism of fire in the cry of the penitent and the joyous outburst of liberated souls, the first-fruit of the wonderful harvest that has never ceased through all these varying years. My sought-for watchword was there, staring me in the face, from that my first text :

‘A LIVING CHRIST FOR A DYING WORLD.’

That motto is still our rally-cry. It has been printed



Photos: Crown Studios, Sydney.]

GROUP OF CENTRAL MISSION BUILDINGS.

1. Old York Street Church. 2. Centenary Hall (Men's Midday Meeting). 3. Children's Home, 'Dalmar.' 4. Alexandra Girls' Home. 5. Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest. 6. Vickery Mission Settlement (Castlereagh Street frontage).

[Face p. 134]

at the head of every report. *Our Weekly Greeting* has sent it forth to every part of the Southern World. And many a time and oft it has been shouted forth by our hosts in their moments of glowing victory.

That brief sentence reveals a secret which, if it could once be grasped by the Church of God, would do more to solve our problems, clog the tongues of our pessimists, give hope to our race, aye, and to save it, than those attenuations thereof too often to be found in many of our churches. If that fails, the bottom has dropped out of the world, and humanity is bankrupt. But, thank God, it has never failed—never once, at any time, in any place. Loyalty to the good news, as at first proclaimed, is bound to-day to reproduce its first works, and make normal the experiences of the Day of Pentecost. If that be so, then why, oh why, are we not everywhere content to stand loyally and enthusiastically by our first great charter?

A goodly volume might be written descriptive of our first year of struggle. To-day I wonder as I think of the difficulties that everywhere hemmed us in. Remember, the Conference had resolved upon *an experiment*—‘a forlorn hope,’ as it was called by many. There were but few who believed that success was possible. The editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney’s leading newspaper, and who himself had been one of Methodism’s greatest preachers, did not hesitate to say that the enterprise was foredoomed to failure. Many of our leading men, both ministers and laymen, honestly shared in the same opinion.

Our first resolve was to carry our message into the streets. What was the good of standing in that handsome and historic pulpit, with little but empty pews before us, whilst at the same hour, within a stone’s throw, thousands of people were wandering up and down our main streets? If they would not come to us, it was manifestly our duty to go to them. We purchased a Mason and Hamlin organ, placed it upon a ‘gospel chariot’ of our own designing, and away we went anxious to capture the kerbstone crowds. This in itself gave offence to certain conservative brethren, who spoke of it as *infra dig.*, and on three separate occasions subjected us and our new methods to the severest criticism at the monthly preachers’ meetings. One can afford to laugh at it all

nowadays, but at the time it was by no means a laughing matter. True, we were nervous and inexperienced, but we had received our commission, and were red-hot to have it delivered. If one method failed, we must try another. But we were strangely hampered by the unjust criticisms of men—disciples of the ubiquitous Mrs. Grundy—who never once came near us, but condemned us because of ‘what they had been told.’

But much more serious was the long-continued and almost furious opposition that met us from what at that time was a militant force to be reckoned with. Every Sunday night two of the leading theatres of the city were crowded, mostly by working men, who cheered to the echo the denunciations by peripatetic and highly-paid infidel lecturers of the beliefs and practices of the Christian Church. These people were exasperated at the temerity of a handful of fanatics who dared to take their stand in the leading street of the city to preach, as they put it, of one who never lived, and of truths that were the greatest of untruths, &c. For twelve weary months we fought that crowd, not by denouncing them, but by persistently sounding our gospel’s positive note. They sneered, they howled, they argued, they tried to upset us. But all the while, unknown to them, and even to us, they were playing into our hands. Gradually our songs and our message gained us converts from the very worst of this baser sort. The climax of their opposition, and also of our triumph, was reached when one night one of their champions, as was their wont, sought to upset our meeting. Strangely enough, a drunken sundowner in the crowd staggered to the front to champion our cause, and before we could interfere two men were fighting at our very feet. Here was a nice state of things! What would not Mrs. Grundy have to say to this? Whilst these men were struggling in each other’s arms an inspiration came to us. How could I preach with men fighting like Kilkenny cats within three yards of me? But I could sing, and without thinking of the appropriateness of my choice I burst out with my first street solo:

Jesus! The name high over all,
In hell, or ‘earth, or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly.

As I sang the crowd surged hither and thither. The cry went out, 'The parson's having a fight,' and before I ceased my solo hundreds of men came running to us, and I preached to the biggest street congregation yet seen. And, strangely enough, from that day the opposition of the infidel crowd waned, and our work took to itself added strength. For over thirty years we have held services at that corner, the finest open-air stand in Australia. And at that sacred spot, in reality, the Central Mission was born.

That our fight with these organized forces of evil was not in vain will be gathered from preserved records now lying before me. From the beginning God put His seal upon the work. When once a start was made, there was no looking back. Numerically, financially, spiritually, the growth was gradual, but definite. The names and addresses of 788 persons who personally sought salvation at the various meetings held during the first sixteen months are before me. Conversions at every meeting became the order of the day. The following journal extracts will indicate the spirit and character of the work :

'Sunday, April 13, 1884.—First service at York Street. Two hundred and fifty people present, mostly there to show sympathy with the new venture. Text, Col. i. 27. Was wonderfully supported in the delivery of my first message. Determined from the very start to stand by old-fashioned Methodist ideals. A strong appeal was made for immediate decision. Of those who responded were the following : Mrs. C., separated from her husband, in great distress of soul, ultimately found rest in a Saviour's love. Mr. R., a backslider. Had been a Christian in England. His removal to Australia was disastrous to his soul's welfare. In the backblocks he lost his hold of God. To-night was gloriously restored. Mr. J., an old German colonist. How the good man did cry for mercy ! " God help me ! I am so miserable. My wife and my children are all dead. I've been tempted a dozen times to commit suicide, but I couldn't do it ; no, sir, I couldn't do it." Late at night the poor fellow went away weeping tears of joy. A fine young fellow, son of a local preacher, rose asking for the prayers of the people, and

yet for some time resisted the call to fall upon his knees and plead for pardon. At length the fountains of his heart were broken up, and in an agony he fought the battle of unbelief, and ere long, with an energy it was good to witness, cast himself upon Christ as his Saviour. Glory to God for this victory! I take these souls as the first-fruits of a glorious harvest to be reaped in dear old York Street.'

'*Sunday, April 20.*—Congregation of 300. Got the workers to surround me behind the communion-rail in the after-meeting—just as we used to do in dear old Yorkshire—and soon we had the joy of dealing with fifteen penitents, amongst them two bluejackets from H.M.S. *Dart*.'

'*Sunday, April 27.*—In spite of rain, 350 persons at the night service. Several conversions, including a bluejacket from H.M. flagship the *Nelson*.'

'*Sunday, May 4.*—A band of workers this morning visited ships and boarding-houses. Over 500 at evening service, five young men coming forward seeking salvation.'

'*Sunday, May 11.*—Our first open-air service, at the town-hall corner. Over 400 present. Mr. Boyer played the organ. We sang through the streets to the church. A congregation of 600. A wonderful service and a glorious after-meeting. Among the converts was a young Roman Catholic, whose father is secretary of one of the large railway companies in England. This lad grew restless at the desk in his father's office, and ran away to sea. In Sydney he fell among thieves, who robbed him of his money, his kit, and most of the clothes upon his back. He was a pitiable object as he crept up the aisle to the penitent-form—dirty, ragged, and half-naked. Thank God, the path to the Cross was open to him, and he found his way there.' [For some time this young fellow continued with us. Ultimately we got him back to England, where he was welcomed by his father, and settled down to the work from which he had run away.] 'Other converts included a former Sunday-school teacher; an ex-circuit steward from Victoria; a backslider recently arrived from Hull; a man just released from jail, formerly a commercial traveller in London, and a member of our City Road Church; and also a young fellow recently arrived from

New Zealand, terribly diseased in mind and body, the fruitage of awful sin, and yet a man of considerable intelligence.'

Tuesday, May 20.—A remarkable class-meeting; in spite of rain, 29 were present, most of them new converts. Two more found Christ in the meeting. One man, converted on Sunday night, gave his testimony thus: "I am fifty-five years old, but the last three days have been the most comfortablist I've spent in my life." Another told how he had been drawn into the church on Sunday night by the singing in the street. A third—a soldier from our City Battery—had been convinced of sin, and converted only a week or two ago. The whole meeting was throughout in a state of white heat. What singing, what praying, what glorious old-fashioned Pentecostal testifying! Lord, keep me strong in body and in soul for this blessed work.'

And so the record runs on, week after week, through all these thirty years; rarely a week in all that time without conversions.

By the end of the first year a new difficulty faced us. How were we to accommodate the crowds that now filled the church to overflowing? A new spirit possessed the Conference of 1885. Thus far 'the experiment' had succeeded beyond our expectations, and now a committee was appointed, not to consider proposals for the disposal of the property, but to find ways and means for providing adequate accommodation for the overflowing congregations. The result of these negotiations was that the Conference decided to build an up-to-date mission-hall on the site of the old church. The Centenary Hall, built at a cost of £30,000 and seating 1,750 people, was the result. The new premises were opened in the month of October, 1888. Here for twenty years the work proceeded with unvarying success. The large hall was filled from the start. Here were inaugurated the many philanthropic, educational, social, and evangelistic agencies of which this record will speak. In the month of April, 1908, through the generosity of the late Hon. Ebenezer Vickery, M.L.C., the magnificent Lyceum Hall premises became our centre. Particulars of this development will be found elsewhere; suffice it to say that here continues to gather the largest regular congregation in the Southern World,

the main auditorium, seating between two and three thousand people, being filled every Sunday.

Under the heading 'The Evolution of a Mission,' the C.M.M. report for 1914 furnishes the following facts, which will, I am sure, be read with more than ordinary interest :

'C.M.M. established as a Circuit Mission, April, 1884 ; Seamen's Mission branch started, 1886 ; old York Street Church closed, November, 1886 ; Centenary Hall opened, October, 1888 ; C.M.M. settled on a Connexional basis, April, 1889 ; Evangelists' Training Institute, 1889 ; Home for "Sisters of the People" opened, 1890 ; Home for Destitute Children, 1893 ; Medical Institute for Treatment of Inebriates, 1897 ; *Our Weekly Greeting* first published, 1900 ; Alexandra Home for Friendless and Fallen Girls opened, 1902 ; "Helping Hand" Mission Hall started, 1903 ; Rawson Hall opened, 1904 ; "Hope Haven" Women's Shelter, 1907 ; Lyceum Hall opened, 1908 ; The "Lyceum People's Own" (L.P.O.) movement started, June, 1908 ; Workmen's Home opened, August, 1908 ; "The Vickery Mission Settlement" Buildings dedicated, September, 1908 ; Men's Shelter opened, October, 1908 ; Male Immigration Dépôt, 1910 ; Employment Bureau, Central People's Hostel, Home for Domestic Servants, Immigration Dépôt for Women and Children, and Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest, 1912 ; Seamen's Institute enlarged, 1913.'

XII.

A SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE AND A SPIRITUALIZING FORCE

Natural and spiritual transformations—No other alternative—
'Where do you place the Holy Ghost?'—The new call, our
only hope—Our foundation-stones—The Pentecostal flag—
Apostolic methods mean Apostolic results—A word of warning
—Methodism's palmiest days—What Australia is crying for
—The minister of the future—*A Call to Prayer*—'Ten-days'
Prayer-meeting,' and what happened—*The Glad Tidings*.

I HAVE stood at night-time out in the great Australian forest-land, and have found it to be spectre-ladened, the abode of hooting owls and croaking frogs, with fever vapours rising from its sponge-like morass, forbidding in its skeleton-like ugliness. And I have seen the same spot transformed into a fairy-land, dignified by one touch of sunshine, as from the far-away heavens there have come golden strands of light—the very breath of God—sweetening, elevating, blessing every single thing they have touched.

It is sometimes thus with the Church of God. A Christian church without a spiritual atmosphere is as a world without sunshine, a garden without flowers, a family without a mother. You may put into it what else you like—you may pack it with the adornments of culture and of art; you may place rich men in its pews and eloquent men in its pulpit; its spire may reach heavenwards, and its organ-tones may be celestial—all this you may have, and more; yet for the purpose for which that church stands, 'Failure' must still be written across its portals. But let but one spark of the spiritualizing fire that comes from the Divine Presence be added, and the desert blossoms as the rose, and the beauty of the Lord our God rests upon it.

All this is to me as a parable of what I have seen in the

history of this Central Mission. I have already written of the early dearth of 'old York Street'; a church, and yet not a church; all that heart could wish in the matter of space and stately adornment, with a history behind it about the finest that Australia could furnish, and yet—a dreary spiritual waste!

When the new call came, one's only hope lay in the creation of a spiritual atmosphere. There was no other alternative. All else had been tried, and tried in vain. The faithful few were driven to their knees; their cry went out to the God of the ancient Pentecost. Nor did they cry in vain. Out of the vortex of a depressing hopelessness there gradually evolved a new life. The sun had risen, and hence 'the wilderness and the solitary place' simply had to 'rejoice and blossom as the rose.' It has been thus through all these moving years. The work that in those early days grew out of 'all-nights of prayer' and 'quiet days with God'; that was fostered by 'Holiness Conventions' and 'weekly consecration services'; that was built upon the foundation of self-denial, surrender, and Christian fellowship, is still being driven by the same Power that first gave it motive-force. What to-day gives to this C.M.M. its right to be spoken of—to quote a godly American who recently visited us—as 'a life-saving station' set down in the midst of this great wicked city, is that it lives and thrives because the Spirit of God is in it. It continues through all these varying years as one of the best-known spiritualizing forces of Australasia because of set purpose it gives itself to the creation of a spiritual atmosphere.

Oh, sirs, let it be written down as with a pen of gold that herein everywhere lies the Church's safety. Without this its right to live ceases to be. Loyalty to the flag unfurled at Pentecost has ever been demonstrated as God's ordained plan for the creation of Churches that shall move and bless and save the people. Apostolic methods will still produce Apostolic results. All this, thank God, continues to this day to be illustrated in the daily life of this Mission. For an explanation of the converting power that rests upon the Sunday night congregation, you must go to the Saturday night consecration service. You can only explain the spiritual *esprit de corps* of the workers by

falling back upon the almost innumerable meetings that are held for fellowship, prayer, testimony, and Bible-study. Preach? I tell you the Lyceum pulpit is one of the easiest places in these Southern lands from which to preach. And why so? Because it is cushioned by the prayers of an earnest and godly people.

I have often ventured the remark, which I again repeat, that let the class- and the prayer-meeting die out of this C.M.M., as, unfortunately, they have died out of not a few of our churches, and you may substitute what else in all this wide world you please, 'Ichabod' will soon be found written upon its doorposts. We may go on feeding the hungry, caring for the outcast; we may educate our young men, and seek to interest our young maidens; we may multiply our guilds and bands; we may attract crowds by startling preaching, and give them the very best of music; we may do all this, and more—and yet, if the Holy Spirit of God is not honoured, it will all amount to little more than 'sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.' I avow that it has been because the C.M.M. has had the courage for over thirty years to stand not only by the New Testament evangel, but by the old-fashioned Methodist method of proclaiming that evangel, that it continues to grow and to enjoy a reputation of which any church, in any part of the world, might justly be proud. I tremble as I think of the bare possibility of this work ever being shifted from its old moorings. Disaster would be bound to follow. But faithfulness to old traditions, loyalty to the old spirit, surrender to the dominating influence of the Holy Ghost, and this work, aye, and all Christian work, will step out into yet wider spheres of blessing and of power.

I make bold this day to champion the old-fashioned evangelism of Methodism's palmiest days. When, over thirty years ago, this work was thrust upon us, I resolved to test, *at all cost*, whether or no we had the right to expect in these times, with all our 'advanced thought' and altered environment, the same kind of spiritual results as were witnessed in the earlier days of our great Church's history. For nearly one-third of a century, no matter who has been in charge of the work, there has not been one hour's disloyalty to the first principles upon which

the work was founded. The theological platform of 1884 is that of 1918. The Mission has not changed its viewpoint one iota: the same gospel, the same appeals, the same methods, and, thank God, the same results. Ministers, workers, members, have been trained to pray and toil and preach for conversions; conversions first, conversions last, conversions all through—that has been the Mission's creed. Let it be known far and wide that, year in, year out, from superintendent to youngest convert, the unvarying resolve of the C.M.M. has been to demonstrate that the evangelism that gave us the Acts of the Apostles, that saved Europe in the sixteenth century, that created Methodism, that is gradually winning heathenism to the Cross, is good enough for Sydney in this year of grace.

I have not taken up my pen to preach, other than on the line of illustration; yet pardon me if I say that I believe that Australia is to-day yearning for this positive evangel of the Acts of the Apostles, of Erfurt, and of Epworth. She has but little heart for learned and eloquent treatises on new theologies and higher criticisms. Our empty pews rebuke us because too often we offer the people a stone in place of bread. We are painfully failing, many of us, because we have sailed past the prayer-meeting and the Sunday night after-service, because so many of our sermons furnish no answer to the soul's pregnant question, 'What must I do to be saved?' If my voice were strong enough to reach to every theological seminary, every evangelist's training-home, every local preachers' meeting in Christendom, my soul would cry out, 'For God's sake, for your own and the Church's sake, for the sake of the dying thousands perishing at your feet, in spite of your intellectual conceits that would tempt you to preach pretty, eloquent, materialistic nothings, dare to shake yourselves free from the entanglements of much that goes by the name of "modern progressive thought," dare to bathe your souls in the old theologies, dare to seek to be baptized with the holy fire that set England on a blaze in the time of the Wesleys; and thus you will succeed, as on no other possible lines can you succeed, in bringing back to our churches the old-time fervour, aye, and the old-time triumphant success.'

I am not a prophet, but at this moment the prophetic

spirit seems to possess me. After a lifetime given to aggressive evangelism, during many years in which, with an eagerness that I cannot put into words, I have striven—in Europe, in America, and in this Southern World—to understand the signs of the times, I am this day more profoundly convinced than ever *that the minister of the future will be the evangelist*. Everywhere there is a rebound from the abstract philosophic preaching that has had its day; men are tired of dissertations upon ‘the doings of the week’ and upon the weaknesses of the beliefs of others; weary humanity no longer warms to clash of arms and flare of oratory; the cry is, ‘Give us, oh, give us the Bread of Life!’ Young preacher, if you are wise, you will face this significant fact at all costs. You will seek to be equipped by the Holy Ghost, by many a visit to the Pentecostal chamber, and by the burning behind you of many of your mental bridges, upon whose construction you have probably so warmly congratulated yourselves, and you will be content to copy Paul and Luther, Wesley and Whitefield, David Stoner and John Nelson, and go forth as red-hot evangelists of the Cross, heralds of the Crucified, the fiery prophets of Pentecost; and so you will succeed, as on no other lines, to move and win the people.

Early in the history of the Mission it was borne in upon the mind of the workers that if we wished to secure Pentecostal results we must be prepared to adopt Pentecostal methods. There is no more a royal road to the acquiring of spiritual power than there is to the mastery of the brain. Pentecost is never flung at the head of an unprepared Church. The valley of humble, faithful prayer must needs be trod ere one can hope to reach the mountain-top of power. Introspection before there can be inspiration, that seemed to us to be God’s order. If Christ ‘continued all night in prayer,’ why should not we? If long days of tarrying in the upper room had to precede the descent of the tongues of fire and the rushing wind, why should we look for anything beyond the ordinary, should there be lacking in us the same spirit of self-sacrificing devotion? Hence grew the half-nights and whole nights of prayer, the ‘quiet days with God,’ the three days’ Conventions, the field camp-meetings, that had so

much to do in those formative days in moulding the spirit and temper of the young work.

Realizing thus early in the work that devotion is the fly-wheel in the power-house of the Church, we were led to issue *A Call to Prayer*. That document lies before me at this writing. It was a simple scriptural statement of the Church's need, and of God's method for the supplying of that need. Ultimately, after much of consultation and much of prayer, a four-page manifesto was sent forth, inviting Christians to join us in a 'Ten-days' Prayer-meeting.' Naturally such a proposal was received by some with wondering speculation. Fortunately there was no outspoken opposition. 'What does it mean?' 'What are these people up to now?' 'Why can't folk take their religion reasonably?' Such were the queries addressed to us by some. But there were others, and many of them, who gave the proposal the warmest of welcomes. Four daily meetings were arranged for—from 7 to 8 a.m., from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., from 2.30 to 5.30, and from 7 to 10 p.m., with meetings for praise and testimony between. The two Sundays were, in even more marked fashion, given to waiting upon God. Sympathetic ministers and laymen were invited to preside at the various sessions, and were allowed an absolutely free hand. There was no choir, but little advertising, and certainly no red-tape. The attendance naturally varied, but there was always a goodly number present. Frequently several hundreds were on their knees at one time. Throughout there was no straining after effect, no wild-fire, no rhapsodic excitement. The word *earnestness* best describes the entire series of meetings. The prayer of faith went up to God all day long. We 'were all of one accord in one place.' At times the people were hushed by 'the awe that dare not move'; at others the joyous outbursts of song and of prayer were such as were wont to be heard in early Methodist days.

The one hour of that time of prayer that still lingers with me, and upon which many of us look back as giving to the Mission its baptism of fire, was between eleven and twelve o'clock on the morning of the second Tuesday. About the leader for that hour we had felt some concern; we were uncertain whither his loquacity might lead us.

But God took him into His own hands. After half an hour upon our knees the leader rose to address us. This was the moment of our anxiety; but, dear heart, how the Lord did bring us through, to be sure! The good man had spoken but for a few minutes, when suddenly he stopped, and with tears in his eyes stammered out, 'I cannot speak; let us pray.' In a moment a power such as I have never felt either before or since came upon us. There is one little spot in that room the thought of which will always be sacred to me, the spot where I, with others, fell upon our faces and simply bathed our souls in the fullness of grace that was being poured upon us. No one attempted to pray, no song was sung. Touched by the finger of God, we simply lay there, listening, wondering, adoring. That hour gave to the C.M.M. its Pentecost of grace and influence. Even yet it lingers with us. As we rose from our knees, every eye bedimmed with tears, we instinctively burst out into a song that from that day became our 'Song of Victory,' and is still sung by us in our moments of triumph:

For the Lion of Judah
Shall break every chain;
And give us the victory
Again and again.

It only remains to be added that at one of our all-day camp-meetings, at which several thousand people were present, a relay of steamers bringing the people to and fro throughout the day, what came to be known as 'The United Methodist Holiness Association' was formed, whose organ, *The Glad Tidings*, is still sent forth through these lands as the Church's mouthpiece proclaiming the doctrine and the experience of entire sanctification.

XIII

THE REMAKING OF MEN: TRIUMPHS OF SAVING GRACE

Heroes of the A.M.C.—'Finished robes from outcast stuff'—If not the grace of God, then what?—Still the age of miracles—
—Living pictures—*De profundis*—Whitechapel George—The transformation of Jack the Sweep—The remaking of 'Happy Bill'—A remarkable life—A saintly passing away.

I CAME across the above phrase the other day in a remarkable newspaper article describing the wonderful things being done by our army surgeons in the hospitals at the front. Heroes of the nation, whose poor bodies had been torn by shrapnel, pierced by cruel bullet, or hacked by cold steel, lying at the point of death, wondrously patched, mended, restored by the patient skill of those saviours of the body, those silent, plodding heroes of the A.M.C.

I want to tell a similar story, not of torn bodies, but of wrecked souls. Before me lie the records of many of Australia's weaklings who have been transformed into sturdy saints: men and women driven to the wall in the unequal battle of life, who had missed their chance, and bidden farewell to hope; who have yet in this C.M.M. been ransomed, forgiven, and, by the grace of God, made over again. Dr. Jowett, in one of his captivating books, speaks of Sir Titus Salt, who 'was one day pacing the docks at Liverpool and saw great quantities of dirty waste material lying in unregarded heaps. He looked at the unpromising substance, and in his mind's eye saw finished fabrics, warm and welcome garments; and ere long the power of the imagination devised ministries for converting the outcast stuff into refined and finished robes.' It is in my heart to write of a power greater even than that. Twice, nay, three times, have I girdled this globe, have seen many strange and mysterious things; but nowhere, in any land, among any people, have I met

with an influence so mysterious, a power so far-reaching, an agency so transforming, as that marvellous something we call the Saving Grace of God. Sneer as you may at my story, you disciples of doubt ! Laugh, as you probably will as you tell me that the age of miracles is behind us ! I fling your cold negations in your teeth ; for have I not seen, not once now and again, but as the normal condition of things during all these long years, exhibitions of power in the remaking of broken men such as can never be explained away by the cold sophistries of unbelief or the colder, cruder objections of intellectual satire ? I tell you that not for one passing moment can one's faith be shaken by your finely-spun theories of strident materialism. I have seen. I know. I am not anxious to explain. The finite may never grasp the Infinite, but, thank God, it can feel the Infinite ! And in the uplifting of men from the lowest depths, in the replenishing of famished souls, in the healing of such as had received the touch of a death worse than that of the body, I have felt this power of the Infinite. The age of miracles has *not* passed ; the Holy Ghost is not dead. The Sydney C.M.M. can furnish illustrations of the marvels of grace that are of the same spirit as were the moral miracles of the Acts of the Apostles, or the miracles of healing that England witnessed under the Wesleys.

I am not troubling myself to discover a scientific basis for this my belief. I am not anxious to find an explanation for the things—so wonderful—that it has been my privilege to witness, along the lines of psychological research, or of 'mental magnetism'—whatever that may mean. It is enough for me to know what I know. *Such works as these are their own evidence.* It is not in man to give life. It takes a God to raise a Lazarus. The saving of men is God's prerogative, in which none may share.

This chapter will be a series of living pictures of men and of women, most of whom have been well known, and many of them still with us, any one of whom would hasten to bring me to book were I in any degree to indulge in exaggerated statement. All that I ask is that you carefully ponder the stories here told, and then show me, if you can, anything anywhere that, outside the saving grace of God, can explain these records of healing and

of saving power. I desire as far as possible in these narrations to bury the personal pronoun. What matters it who administered the physic so long as the patient was saved? During all these over thirty years men like James A. Bowring, Rainsford Bavin, W. Wools Rutledge, P. J. Stephen, and S. J. Hoban have at times been at the helm; and under the ministry of these and of their colleagues very many of our brightest trophies have been won. But names stand for little; it is the work itself that is everything.

De Profundis.—‘Don’t let that man come in. He’s drunk, and will disturb the meeting.’

A rough, warm-hearted fellow linked his arm in that of the ‘drunk,’ and replied, ‘He’s going to come in; he has got a soul as well as you.’

The rough man had his way, and up the grand staircase of the Centenary Hall came the strange pair.

I well remember that night. It was wet and steamy, but the fort had been held at the town-hall corner; and now, headed by a remnant of the brass band, the enthusiastic few marched into the building.

The ‘drunk’ was in a sorry plight: hair matted, clothes *in extremis*, face blurred and filthily dirty, eyes bloodshot, boots in holes and held together with string. The wretched man staggered into a distant corner. Shrinking within himself, and avoided by other strangers, he there met the crisis of his life.

Who was he? For many years that man had been known as one of the prominent business men of this city; the proprietor of a furniture warehouse whose turnover reached very many thousands a year. For years he had been an official member of one of our city churches, trusted by all who knew him.

Alas, little by little the drink fiend—dressed as an angel of light—tempted, then gripped him. He fell. The struggle at first was fierce, but ultimately whisky won the day, and gradually he slid down, down into the lowest depths. He lost his business; his wife and family were compelled to leave him; he became a social outcast, and soon was known as one of Sydney’s hopeless wrecks. When drunk he would steal into some church, disturb

the congregation, and wake up next morning to find himself in a police-cell. For long the wretched man had slept under the trees in the Domain by night, and begged crusts of bread and glasses of whisky from his old pals by day.

That wet night this homeless derelict, I say, met the crisis of his life.

A well-known Sydney J.P. was helping us at that service. Said the leader to him, 'Mr. C., you see that wretched man in yonder corner; go and speak to him.' A little later he returned to the desk and, with a look of strange concern on his face, said, 'Do you know that man? He is about the very worst character in Sydney. If that man gets converted, never again can I doubt the power of the grace of God.'

What happened? We were on our knees pleading with God for that man's soul. The influence of the meeting partly sobered him, and ere long he was in an agony of penitent yearning for God's pardoning mercy. It came, and in this fashion. We had started to sing the old gospel song:

Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry;
—Unless Thou help me I must die;
O bring Thy free salvation nigh,
And take me as I am.

As the song went on, the poor fellow seized upon the words—much as a drowning man might grasp at a passing plank—'Oh, take me as I am.' Feebly at first, but gradually, his soul took fire; again and again he cried out, 'Oh, take me as I am.' Ere long the despairing cry was answered. He came into the hall that night an outcast drunkard; he left it a saved man.

What followed? Many years have fled since that memorable night. Never a drop of drink afterwards entered his mouth. The uphill struggle at first was severe. Few trusted him; many tempted him, but he never wavered. A book could be written giving that man's story. He lived for over twenty years after his conversion, and became one of the most honoured and best-beloved members and workers of the Mission. His testimony and his life probably led hundreds of drunkards to Christ. Ere long he regained a footing in the city's commerce.

Men again learned to respect and to trust him. He was the idol of the C.M.M. workers, and I was proud to call him friend. Not long ago in the Waverley Cemetery, we committed his body to its last resting-place. Ministers and leading officials of various Churches were there, and not a few were led publicly to thank God for the blessed influence of such a life upon themselves. He died, as for over twenty years he had lived, a saint of God !

'Whitechapel George.'—I wish to tell the story of one who for years, in London and in Sydney, was known as a disreputable, drunken, gambling play-actor, but who to-day stands forth as fine a fellow as one could meet in a day's march. What was the medicine that effected the regeneration? *'Whitechapel George,'* as he was called among his companions in sin, was born close to Charrington's great hall in Mile End Road. At one time I lived within five minutes' walk of that spot, and know the neighbourhood as one of the worst even in the East End of London. Here George received his early education in wrongdoing. As a youth he qualified for the stage—the stage of the notorious penny gaff. His downward career was a rapid one. As a common showman on the Whitechapel wastes he reached his lowest degeneracy. The flaring gin-palaces of that street claimed him. The daily associate of blacklegs of every type, no wonder that he soon touched bottom and became an accomplished swindler. His neglected wife and children had the saddest of sad times. George himself at intervals suffered from remorse, during one of which attacks he stole away from London, and came out to Australia in the hope that, as he himself expressed it, *'unknown to anybody, I might hope to make a fresh start.'*

Practically penniless, he landed in Sydney. As ill-fate would have it, the very first person he met on the wharf was one of his London companions in wrongdoing, a member of his own gambling-den in Whitechapel. Before he knew it he was again mixed up with a set of villainous scoundrels of the lowest type, and was soon one of the ringleaders of the gang. Here he sank to depths of vice he had never reached in London.

One bright Sunday morning the wretched man was

seated on one of the seats in our Hyde Park, stung by remorse, staggering on the brink of hell. He had just come out of a drunken and gambling carouse that had lasted for several days and nights. The blackness of despair settled down on him. He thought of the chances he had thrown away, of the wife and children he had deserted. In spite of all his wrongdoing, George was a man with a heart in him. As there he sat he realized that he had come to the end of things. One of two things must happen: either a plunge in the harbour, or one more desperate struggle for deliverance. Which should it be?

Let no one tell me that it was by chance that at that moment there came that way one of the workers of the C.M.M. Not a word was said by the passing stranger other than, 'Will you accept one of these? We shall be glad to see you at the Centenary Hall to-night.' That was all, and in a moment the worker had passed on to others. The despairing man studied carefully the red handbill, with its picture of the crowded interior of the hall—a messenger, by the way, that has induced thousands to come to our centre—and a strange longing seized him. It was the whispering of the Spirit of God seeking to lure him to another and a better life. With a shudder he pulled himself together, and cried out, 'I'll go; yes, God helping me, I'll go.'

At first he stood outside the crowd at the street service under the shadow of our great City Hall. Later he followed us to our indoor service. Brought there by the Holy Spirit, what wonder that he felt that the preacher's message was meant especially for him? Like Felix, he trembled under the spell of the message. Alternating between despair and hope, he at last fell upon his knees and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' That prayer, never offered in vain, entered the ears of the loving Father of us all, and ere the night had spent itself the wandering outcast gambler was at rest.

Without the delay of a day that man was welcomed into the work of the Mission. Rightly or wrongly—and we have at times been severely criticized for acting thus—it has never been the custom of the C.M.M. to put its converts on the shelf for the first few months that we might have proof of their genuineness. Experience very

early taught us that if you want to keep your converts you must trust them from the very first, and give them some personal interest in the work that helped them to Christ. The saddest of sad pictures rises before my mind's eye at this moment. Many years ago at a service I conducted two women came forward as seekers. One was the wife of a merchant in the city; the other a gay, yet broken woman of the town. Both professed conversion; both joined the fellowship of the church. The former was welcomed with open arms; the latter—well, she was not welcomed at all. The leader spoke to her kindly, but the ladies of the class preferred to sit at a distance. They were 'testing her genuineness,' forsooth! She came again and again, and made a desperate struggle to account for this different treatment of the two. At length, alas, the tempter got her ear. 'If this be Christianity I will have none of it.' She again plunged into sin, and ere many months was found dead in a low public-house. At the last day upon whose shoulders will rest the guilt of that woman's downfall? It has never been thus at the C.M.M. At once the convert is given to feel that he has a share in the work—the holding of a torch, the pushing of the organ, the giving out of a handbill, something that helps the man to regain his self-respect.

Gradually George began to feel his feet. Within a few weeks he was heard telling the George Street crowds the story of his conversion, telling it to the very men with whom for so long he had consorted in crime. Ere long he developed into one of the finest open-air speakers this Mission has ever produced. One day he came into my office and, under much feeling, said, 'I must go to London. I want to tell my wife the good news; and something tells me I have to preach Christ's wonderful salvation to the crowds of Whitechapel, among whom I fell.' He sought a ship, and forthwith worked his passage to London, and was soon at work as a mission preacher in his old haunts of sin.

A year or two afterwards I was sent to England by my Conference on a special mission. The first man to welcome me at the London Docks was my friend George Prentice. I at once engaged him to help in my mission work throughout Great Britain. For fourteen months he travelled

with me, playing his silver cornet at street services, addressing factory meetings, helping in evangelistic after-meetings, and manipulating the lantern at my lectures. There are many in England to-day who remember George Prentice's fine work. At the last day many will be the crown of his rejoicing. Is not this worth while?

The Transformation of Jack Dillon, 'The Converted Sweep.'—One of the quaintest, most original, and most devoted workers of the C.M.M. to-day is John Dillon. Everybody loves him, the enemies of the Cross believe in him, Christian ministers send for him to tell his story to their people, and many a poor wastrel has been won to Christ by him. But what an awful life was his! For thirty years a drunkard. Professedly a Roman Catholic, he and religion had nothing in common. Drink unmanned him, cursed him, made a fiend of him. To furnish some idea of the former character of this long-time wanderer, I reprint a letter he sent me some time since, written in the hope of warning and helping such as, like himself, had yielded to the devil's touch. I had the dismal story published under the title of *Three Days with the Devil in the Back Country*.

'In the year 1885,' he writes, 'I went into a bush public-house on the Darling River, carrying in my pocket a cheque for £33. Whilst waiting for the dinner which I had ordered, several of us had a drink and a game of cards, just to fill in the time. Waiting for the dinner that never came, I went on playing and drinking, until at last I became drunk, and was then kept drunk by the wretched publican. Within two or three days all my money was gone, whether spent by me or stolen from me I know not, and I was turned out into the bush. Shouldering my "bluey," I made for the Paroo River all alone, with empty pockets, feeling very sick and weary.'

'I kept on walking all day, when late in the afternoon, all of a sudden, I fancied I saw two buggies ahead of me. Alas, it was the first stage of "the horrors" that was creeping over me. I made off into the bush, away from the track, wandering hither and thither, until at last I entered a wild scrub, and with great difficulty dragged myself through until I came to what seemed to me to be

a lake full of delicious wine, with thousands of sheep, big as horses, all round it. I stayed here for a while, and fancied I had a good drink of the wine. I threw away my water-bag, for what need had I of that with so much good wine about? I remember how I got up and kept walking round and round these imagined sheep to keep them all together. Alas, in a moment they all disappeared from before me, and the wine went as well; and there was nothing around me but thick, horrible scrub. Without food and, worse still, without water, the night came on. To sleep was impossible. I dragged myself about all that weary, awful night.

'In the morning I came to a wire fence. Again my poor brain played me strange tricks. I fancied every post to be a man. I gave my swag to one of them because he had none. A little farther on I gave my hat to another, my coat to a third, and then my very shirt was placed upon another. I then fancied that I went to a house that had full and plenty. Here the devil came to me and said, "I say, we'll stay here until the morning." But when the next morning came I found myself lying by the side of a big gate about twelve feet wide. It was on the Groompa Station road. I fancy I see it all before me at this moment. Again I seemed to see the devil, who came to me and said, "Get up, Jack, and swing that gate while I have a ride, and then get a piece of wire out of the fence and hang yourself upon that tree there that is leaning over." I was swinging on the gate when, in the mercy of God, a boundary-rider came up on horseback. He began talking to me; but I had my orders from the devil, and would not stop, until he threw a pint of water out of his water-bag into my face, which brought me to my senses.

'The kind, good fellow put me on to his horse and led me to his hut, and kept me until I got quite well and strong again for the track.

'Alas, even that was no lesson to me. The next cheque I received was knocked down in the same way. Thus it was, year in and year out, in all that bush. It is the same to this day all over the back country—aye, and will be until we get "No LICENCE" throughout the land. With God's help we will work and pray until we get it.'

The story of this man's struggles and his ultimate

victory has been graphically written by the Rev. H. C. Foreman, M.A., for several years my beloved colleague in this work, and himself the instrument of leading this poor drunkard to Christ. It is as follows:

'Darkness lay over the city with its many toilers. The gas-lamps gleamed along narrow streets where mean houses hid within themselves their tragedies of sin and shame. In a poor man's dwelling, on a scanty bed in an ill-furnished room, a little child lay in a burning fever. There were grey shadows around her eyes. Oh the quick breathing of the suffering, restless little thing! The distracted mother could only think of this illness as a painful extra to a lifelong burden. Her husband, a chimney-sweep, was a drunkard. He became a drunkard at seventeen. As a mere boy he used to be sent to fetch brandy for his drunken father from the country public-house. At first the curious lad sipped the strange burning liquid, then grew fond of it, and in the end always had to fill up the bottle with water to escape detection. Thus began a career of pitiable folly. How this miserable man had fallen! On one occasion he was brought home in a tip-dray and tipped out in front of his home, like so much rubbish left on a rubbish-heap. With sorrow he tells how he sold his spectacles for threepence for drink. "When a man will sell his eyes, as it were, for drink, he must love it."

"The devil adopted me very young," he has said; and so he did.

'The little child tossed in her fever, and called "Mother, where's daddy?" "He is up the street," said the broken-hearted woman, "drinking as usual." "Will he come home drunk again, and beat us, mother?" queried the little one. Then in her bed she trembled as a heavy footstep sounded on the pavement. But the footstep passed on, and the child breathed freely.

'Along the street the big, burly chimney-sweep reeled in a drunken stupor. His object was a pint of beer, and still another pint of beer, when he was suddenly arrested by the sound of song in a mission-hall. To the poor drivelling drunkard the melody of the hymn that floated out on the night air came as a benediction. Then his thoughts flew back to the wan, wasted, fever-stricken

child. Perhaps she, his little girl, would like to hear the singing. At any rate he would ask the people to sing to her. Into the mission-hall he made his unsteady way, and proffered his request. The mission workers gladly promised to come and visit him. That night he went home without tasting another drop of liquor.

'Next morning he announced his intention to "go out for a pint of beer." It is true it was Sunday, but John Dillon never had any trouble in getting Sunday beer. "They won't come down to my house," he said, referring to the mission-workers' promise. "They don't want to have anything to do with the likes of me." That Sunday morning resulted in no beer. During his absence two workers of the Balmain Central Mission had visited the drunkard's home. "They prayed for me and the little girl"; we are sure that they prayed also for the poor broken-hearted wife. As they said good-bye to the wife, they left the chimney-sweep an invitation to come to the mission-hall on Monday night.

"I won't wait till Monday night," said the husband; "I'll go up to the Central Hall to-night to get converted."

'That night he "got religion."

'For twelve months John Dillon lived an earnest, devoted life, and his home became brighter and happier. It was still a poor man's home, but there was an increase of comfort there, until once more he fell into the clutches of the drink devil. As in the parable of the empty heart, the seven devils took possession of this unfortunate man, and his last state was even worse than the first. The awful story of that season of relapse can never be told. Things went from bad to worse, till one day "he kicked the missus out, and sold a cart-load and a half of furniture for eight shillings," and went upon an awful spree. There was now no rent for the landlord, and no furniture to levy on. So a move had to be made, and once more the Dillon family sought a new home.

'When the wife and children crept back into the home—and I suppose a drunkard's home is better than the cold charity of the street—the whole family belongings consisted of four butter-boxes for a bedstead, an old wire mattress, some very poor bedding, and three old chairs "that were given to me." That was all in the furniture

line. The mattress was spread on the ground ; the cooking utensils and three chairs and butter-boxes were piled up. John Dillon took hold of one end, a stranger took the other, and so the removal was accomplished.

' We draw the curtain on these scenes of shame and degradation. The husband of this home was nearly always drunk. He cursed, he swore, he stole, until his name was entirely a byword and a disgrace.

' One day he got up and said to his wife, " I'm tired of this. I am going to give it up. I see Mrs. ———, of the pub., wearing clothes you ought to wear. I'll get converted."

" The same old story," bitterly said his wife, " the same old story." Yet she prayed and hoped beyond hope it might be so.

' One Saturday night, at the consecration service in the Centenary Hall, when the writer of this article called for inquirers, John Dillon, the brutish, sottish, prodigal chimney-sweep, stood up and came forward.

' That night against his name in the Book of Life another entry was made : " This my son was lost, and is found." For three years now he has not ceased to follow God. He often tells us :

"I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way."

' Soon after his restoration Mr. Dillon became the caretaker of the Helping Hand Mission-hall, Balmain West. He is proving the blessedness of the psalmist, who said, " I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." His life now is a delightful example of the power of the grace of God to transform the vilest. He lives a life of simple faith, is a very teachable Christian, and, though fifty years of age, sits gladly in the Sunday-school Bible-class. He has given himself to the task of rescuing men who are, as he once was, down " on the floor of the world." In this work he has had much success. His bright face is eloquent of the joy he feels in his new life. The scars and marks upon his face caused by drunken fights will

never pass away ; but there shines in that big, honest face "a light that never shone on sea or land." As he himself says, "I never weighed better, never felt better, was never more respected, and never owed less." "

LATER.—Just as these sheets are being prepared for the press the news reaches us of the promotion of our beloved brother. After an illness in which he has been called to pass through the acutest suffering, but during which he was 'more than conqueror,' he has in triumph gone to see and serve his Lord free from all the painful limitations of the flesh.

The Remaking of 'Big Bill,' one of God's Noblemen in Homespun.—Were the C.M.M. able to show no other fruitage for its long years of effort, the conversion of William Holland would redeem it from the charge of failure. At the time of his death a religious paper closed an appreciative sketch of this good man in these words: 'The Sydney Central Mission has produced many hundreds of remarkable men and women saved by its agency from sin to God, but probably never one quite like unto dear old "Happy Bill." ' I believe that to be true. I have rarely met a man like him. A big, broad-shouldered fellow—he weighed over sixteen stone—with massive head, a face that would have made a comedian's fortune, plenty of rugged force of speech, and, as one put it, 'a heart as big as his body,' no wonder that 'Big Bill,' or 'Happy Bill,' as, after his conversion, men were wont to call him, was beloved by everybody. We were intimate friends for twenty-one years, during which time I rarely saw or heard anything about him that was blameworthy.

And yet this man for years lived on the borders of hell. One has heard of 'the devil's castaways,' a term, by the way, that I do not like. Well, that fairly well describes what 'Big Bill' was when first brought under the influence of the C.M.M. A native of the fair city of Leicester, brought up in a Christian family, married to a Christian wife, surrounded by godly friends, he yet, under specious and long-continued temptation, forsook all for 'the far country' and the 'riotous living'—aye, and for the 'famine' and the 'swine's food' as well. His wife was compelled to leave him ; he became a nuisance to his

friends, was disowned by all, and ultimately shipped off to Australia, like many another English waster, 'to get rid of him,' and was dumped down upon our shores without friends, money, or prospects; and, of course, found it easier still in this far-off land to give vent to the evil that was in him, and soon became an outcast, a disgrace to those who had the handling of him in the Homeland, and a nuisance to the police of the new land to which he had come.

Early in 1885 he 'touched bottom,' getting his living by his wits; loafing, drinking, gambling, almost by day and by night. Near the Circular Quay there stood a low-down public-house—since suppressed—that was the haunt of the lowest of the low. Here forgathered Bill and his pals. On a certain Saturday night he and three familiars sat down around an empty beer-barrel, and for twenty-four hours they gambled and drank. At six o'clock on Sunday evening the burly fellow rose and shook himself, saying to his companions, 'Here, fellows, I've had enough of this. I'm going for a walk up George Street.' Little did he dream at that moment what that walk would lead him to. At our 'Open-air Cathedral,' as it came to be called, at the town-hall corner—a sacred spot indeed, consecrated by tears and cries and by the glorious conversion of many hundreds who had got 'off the track'—'Big Bill' was arrested by the sound of singing. 'It was,' as he was wont to tell the story, 'my mother's favourite song, "Jesu, Lover of my soul." Curiosity led me nearer. I was arrested by the sight of a tall, black-haired, thin parson, who, standing upon a platform, later on sang, "A long time I wandered in darkness and sin." It took hold of my fuddled brain and my poor old battered heart, and I said, "I'll go with these people, and see this thing out." As we sang our way through the streets to old York Street Church, he followed with unsteady step. What followed may never be described in words. He stumbled up those steps an outcast drunkard; he came out of the building a saved and happy, yes, and a sober man.

'Oh, yes,' says our candid friend, 'and of course the usual thing happened; he was drunk again the next day.' Not so. But I will tell you what actually took place. On

the very next Sunday morning the burly man took his stand upon the kerbstone in front of the miserable public-house in which he had spent so much of his time, *and preached the great news of salvation to the very publican at whose hands he had suffered so much and so long.*

A deeply interesting book could be written of the after-career of this remarkable man. He became one of the original members of our first brass band, and for several years was one of our most acceptable open-air workers. He obtained a contract to work a quarry at North Sydney. All his employees were rough men, converts of the C.M.M. Every morning at eleven o'clock—the workman's 'smoke-oh'—these men dropped their tools and gathered round the quarry walls for a quarter of an hour of prayer and praise. Some of them were noisy men from Yorkshire and Cornwall, and there was naturally much talk in the neighbourhood about the strange sounds that came from that quarry.

Later on he was engaged for two or three years as a missionary to the Navvies on a railway in Tasmania. It is stated that many of these godless men were won for Christ under his instrumentality. On returning to Sydney, we secured his reunion to his wife. Together they started business in one of the suburbs, and both of them joined the local church. But there seemed to be no scope there for one so unconventional, so full of fire; and soon a number of friends built him a mission-hall, and started a brass band. A remarkable work of God broke out. Whenever he could, he came over to help us at the C.M.M., the place of his soul's birth. As illustrating the spirit of this dear man, it may be mentioned that about this time we were holding a convention for the deepening of the work of God. He attended one of the meetings. Afterwards he came to me and said, with a strange, questioning look in his eyes, 'I say, Mr. Taylor, what does all this talk about holiness mean? Is there owt better than I've got? My word, but I'm happy. But, look you, if there's owt better I'm going in for it.'

Circumstances led him to the neighbourhood of Orange, where an accident mutilated his hand, and for a long spell he was cut off from his loved work. He always referred to the time he spent in the West as his 'Jonah days.'

Returning to Sydney, he settled in Chatswood, and was captured by the Rev. A. Miller as a member of a Presbyterian

Mission Band just formed, and, strangely enough, was ere long ordained an elder of the church. 'But,' as he quaintly put it to me one day, 'the thing somehow doesn't fit me. Bless the Lord, I must be out in the streets, out among the poor lost ones.' And so for several years, right up to the time of his death, whilst carrying on his Chatswood business, he sought to answer the call of all enthusiastic soul-saving workers. Two months before his death he conducted a mission for the Rev. F. Binns, of Redfern, when quite a number of men were brought to God.

The last time he was with us at the C.M.M. was only a few days before he was called away, when he spoke, with all his peculiar power, at the town-hall corner, where God had first met him, and also at our Two-up Mission-hall for outcast men, where, with all his quaintness and force, he so spoke that several men that night professed conversion. His last work on earth was a wonderful mission at the Devonshire Street Congregational Church, when between sixty and seventy remarkable cases of conversion were recorded. The day after he closed that mission he was taken ill, and for some days alternated between life and death.

What a week was that last one, to be sure! Several times I sat by his bedside. It was as the antechamber of heaven. His wise, glowing, faith-filled words we can never forget. He lost not a moment, when conscious, to commend to others the Saviour he loved with all his soul.

Just before he lost consciousness he turned to the Christian woman who was nursing him.

'Sister,' said he, 'it is night to me now, but it will soon be morning.' His last whispered words were spoken in reply to a question I put to him, 'My dear old friend, is Christ precious to you?' With much effort he whispered, 'Precious—oh—yes—precious.' And thus he passed away.

I have just picked up a newspaper giving a report of 'Happy Bill's' funeral. It reads as follows:

'We have just returned from placing his precious dust in the ground away on the heights of Gore Hill, overlooking the sphere of his grandest victories. It was no ordinary funeral. The place was to many as holy ground. It was indeed a Christian burial. Those doleful psalms so generally read at the grave's side were felt to be out of place. People

sobbed all around that coffin, it is true, but they were tears of joy rather than of sadness. All classes were there. A Methodist, a Presbyterian, and a Congregationalist minister joined in the sacred service. Not a few of those who had been the fellow toilers of the departed one—aye, and men and women led by him to the Saviour's feet—were there. What soul uplifting we felt as the voice of song wafted to the skies "Jesu, Lover of my soul," also one of our late brother's favourites, "We're marching through Immanuel's land," and, finally, the grand Christian Doxology! All were sung with deepest feeling and with buoyant hope. Then followed a prayer-meeting—yes, a prayer-meeting—and as one after another led us to the throne of grace, there were around us many subdued cries, "Oh, glory be to God! Blessed be His name!"

XIV

CHRISTIANITY'S UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT: MORE MODERN MIRACLES

' Thank God, it works '—Saved in his one-hundredth year—A hero of Waterloo—A class member at over a hundred years of age—The converted burglar—Saved from the gallows—Always ' on the job '—From hell to heaven—A young infidel and his mate—Loyalty to an impression, and what came of it—Billy Bray's grandson.

I AM not concerned to answer the objections of those who criticize rather than commend such work as I am giving details of. What matters it? If our critical friends can show us any better way for reaching the end we have in view, by all means let them come along. Our methods may be imperfect and our appeals weak; we may not be *au fait* with the latest phases of scientific thought, nor able to meet the latest objections of the superlatively high critics nor give an answer to much of the anti-Christian materialistic philosophy that is nowadays, alas, so popular in some of our schools of learning. For our present purpose what matter? We have found a something, call it what you may, that can make bad men into good men, and good men into better men; a medicine that can cure the vilest of moral diseases; a force that can lift men from the gates of hell, and put them on the way to heaven; that can sweeten bad tempers, and kill depraved appetites; that can convert swines' snouts into silk purses, and give dead men life. For a lifetime we have been on the job, testing it under ever-varying conditions, and we have never known it to fail. This is Christianity's unanswerable argument. The remaking of men is its trade; and as surely as it changed a blaspheming Saul into the saintly and heroic Paul, so surely it is working its marvels to-day. And you can say nothing against it. Thank God, our gospel works; the clock keeps good time; the river never runs dry.

And so, with glad heart I resume the telling of the miracles of grace that have been—aye, and that, thank God, continue to be—wrought in Sydney ‘in the name of the holy child Jesus.’

Saved in his One-hundredth Year.—His portrait lies before me on my desk. I have never seen one like it. The face is that of a wizened yet still vigorous old man. A flower is in his coat, a soldier’s medal is on his breast. The picture is that of a strange old character, known throughout the Mission as ‘The old Frenchman.’ It was taken on the day he was one hundred years old. His name was Paul Abrams. He was born in Champagne, France, in the year 1793—only a few months after the death of John Wesley, and right in the midst of the notorious days of the French Revolution. He became a soldier of the nation, and fought against the English at the famous battle of Waterloo. In the picture he is seen still wearing the French tricolour and the medal struck in commemoration of the historic conflict. A dreadful scar, the result of a sabre cut from the hand of a sturdy Britisher, disfigures his head. Over seventy years ago he came to Australia, and at the time of his conversion, though nominally a Roman Catholic, had never been inside a church of any kind for over half a century. Now here, in all conscience, is material hard and difficult enough on which to test the quality of any remedial influence that may be brought to play upon it. Is there a power anywhere that can penetrate and remake such? If so, then by all means let it be tried; and should it prove successful, then let the fact be trumpeted forth far and wide, for there is hope for the last and the worst in the world of wrongdoing. Let the story speak for itself.

One of our mission-workers met the tottering old man in the street, and put into his hand one of our well-known red handbills. Just before the service began that night the poor old man slowly entered the Centenary Hall, and took his seat next to my wife. He spent some time comparing the picture of the interior of the crowded hall on the bill in his hand with the reality around him, then settled down to listen to the preacher. A second and a third time he came. His hearing was good; the music delighted him, and ultimately the gospel message reached

his wicked old heart. In a manner that may never be described he was gradually led to see himself as a sinner, and ere long bowed before God, a stricken penitent. Soon the joy of conscious pardon filled his soul. He was ninety-nine years and six months old when the marvellous change took place. It was easy to know that he was converted by the glow upon his face. At every opportunity, in class-meeting and at consecration service, he told out the wonderful news. One testimony I shall never forget. Rising with difficulty to his feet, leaning upon the top of his staff, and, with true French politeness, bowing to the leader of the meeting, in tremulous, impassioned tones, with an attractive French accent to his imperfect English, he began: 'It was not Monsieur Taylor here vat converted me. *No, no, no!* It was not dese kind friends around me—God bless them for all they hev done to help me—vat changed my heart. *No, no, no!*' Then, becoming excited, and pointing his hand upward, he proceeded: 'Oh yes, it vas the dear Lord Jesus Christ Himself vat came down from heaven into dis poor vicked old heart of mine, and saved me from my sins. And now'—and there was a peculiar glow upon the old man's face—'now I am happy; yes, I am so happy!' When, a year or two afterwards, I sailed for England, the old Frenchman was there—the last time I saw him—to bid me farewell. Removing his hat from his head, and bowing as before a king, he took my hand, and, pressing it, said, 'Farewell, Monsieur Taylor. God bless you! Farewell. But come back soon. Ve shall miss you; yes, ve shall miss you.' The old man lived for two or three years after he found the Saviour, a beautiful illustration of the far-reaching influence of our glorious gospel.

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Another Centenarian.—We have to-day meeting with us in my class a remarkable old lady in her one-hundred-and-first year, who has resided in Australia for over eighty-five years. She came from England in the good ship *Argyle* and was seven months on the water. The voyage was of a disastrous character; through a failure of provisions forty seven of the passengers and crew were starved to death. Twenty years ago dear old Mrs. Honeyman was brought

to God under a sermon preached by the Rev. W. W. Rutledge. During all these years she has been one of our most consistent members and enthusiastic workers ; a sweeter, more optimistic old soul I have rarely met with. At every class-meeting she still gives her experience, and it is always tuned to the key-note of a joyous thanksgiving.

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The Converted Burglar.—I cannot resist the desire to give to my readers this story of another of Christ's wonderful up-to-date miracles of grace. Charlie Woodward was not converted at the C.M.M., but at a small mission near by conducted by an Anglican curate, much honoured of God in soul-saving work. The manner of his entering our work was, like himself, unique. On another page I am telling the story of the acquisition of the great Lyceum Theatre. Adjacent to that property stood a notorious gambling-den, known as a 'Two-up School'—probably the worst in Sydney, in which night by night hundreds of men of the vilest type were wont to meet. By a remarkable providence this wretched place came into our hands. It was eagerly seized as a fine adjunct to the Mission's many enterprises, and converted into what came to be known as 'The C.M.M. Two-up School Mission.' Into this place were gathered hundreds of Sydney's derelicts, all of them men. With coffee suppers and red-hot gospel services the workers laid themselves out to catch these men for Christ. What remarkable scenes were here to be seen from week to week ! Very many of Sydney's outcasts—drunks, swindlers, welchers, pickpockets, and men morally unclean—here heard and received the good news of free salvation.

Naturally such a work attracted Charlie Woodward, the converted burglar, who, together with his old pal, Harry Dean, 'the converted pickpocket and welcher,' threw himself enthusiastically into the work.

But who was Charlie? Let me ask him to give the answer in his own stirring and original words :

'My downward career,' writes he, 'started in my school-days. I had to leave every school that I attended, on account of stealing the boys' school money and other articles they possessed.

'After that I fell in with bad companions, and they

started me gambling, drinking, and thieving, and I, with them, plunged into all sorts of petty crime. Then I got too lazy to work, and for seven years I lived without doing a stroke of honest work ; and as I lay in the park during the daytime I would be planning out who I would rob in the night. I am filled with shame as I remember how I robbed my own mother, father, sisters, and brothers, till I made it so hot that they had to lock and bolt every door in the house in order that things might be kept safe.

‘ One time I had to leave home on account of the police coming every night to search the house for me for robbing the landlord. In this fashion I brought shame, sorrow, and sadness into a happy home. I had almost broken a mother’s heart with the sinful life I was leading.

‘ Alas, the small thefts that I had committed, and got away so often scot-free from, did but bring on me a hunger for bigger robberies ; so I got mixed up with worse companions still, and they soon got me into their clutches. They showed me how to make skeleton keys, which, alas, soon became my constant companions. My first two adventures in the burglar line with these new companions were two tobacconist shops. After this my name was soon handed round amongst other burglars as one who was “ the right sort of stuff.”

‘ There was a well-known gambling-den in Chippendale, Sydney, where I spent most of my time. The man who ran that den was a notorious criminal. One time he had received seven years for sticking up a bank, another time five years for perjury, and there were many other charges against his name. He was a sharp, shrewd fellow, well educated, and I dare say about one of the cleverest men that could be found for planning out how a place should be robbed.

‘ From early morning until late at night there could be seen going in and out of that gambling-den gamblers, drunkards, pickpockets, bludgers, and thieves of all descriptions ; and, in fact, some of the worst criminals that could be found in New South Wales.

‘ I remember well how one evening, after playing a game of cards, the leader of this den came over to me with a very cunning smile and look on his face, and said to me, “ Do you know, so-and-so,” calling me by name, “ you look to

me a young fellow who is determined, and if what I hear about you is true you are a man that can be trusted. Now I want you, if you will, to come and join in with me and work with me, and I will guarantee that in a very short time you shall have all the money you need." He gave me time to think the matter over. I knew well that if I decided to go with him I would have to become a member of his gang. Thank God, what I call a wonderful piece of God's providence kept me out of this. I found it impossible to go at the time they needed me. Ever since my conversion I have thanked God for that escape, as just shortly after that, two members of the gang were charged with a capital offence, and were swung into eternity. But, alas, that I soon took up with another companion. He was only a young man, but he had a bad jail record. Both of us used to carry loaded sticks with a quarter of a pound of lead in them, or an iron bar. We used to go round at night-time into quiet places and wait for anyone who looked likely to have a few pounds on him. One of us used to ask for a match, while the other struck him on the head from behind, either with the stick or the iron bar.

'I remember one evening we followed a man into the back of a public-house. My mate grasped him round the throat with his two hands, while I had to rob him. I will never forget that night. The man's eyes and tongue seemed to come out of his head, and when he was let go he was almost choked to death.

'This same companion said to me one day as we stood in front of a little mission-hall down in Redfern, "I want you to give me a hand to steal the organ out of that place." I consented that I would help him. At that mission-hall every Thursday night a men's gospel-meeting was held, and coffee and biscuits were given out. I made up my mind that I would go down on the following Thursday night and have a look round as to which would be the easiest way to get the organ out.

'When the night came—glory be to God, it is a night that I shall never forget—there were over a hundred men present, and amongst them were burglars, pickpockets, jockeys, and all sorts of thieves. The earnestness of the young preacher, whose name was Mr. Yarrington, touched my hard heart, and, glory be to God, instead of removing

the organ, before the meeting closed I had my sins removed. I went into that mission-hall a gambler, drunkard, thief, burglar, and about one of the greatest scoundrels that could be found in Sydney. I thank God I came out a changed and a saved man. I was truly born again. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new; and now I can sing with a rejoicing heart, "Happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." I can never tell how all this was done. God showed me how big a sinner I was. I was horrified to see myself, and cried to God for pardon. For Christ's sake He answered my prayer. That is all I can say about it.

'The night I thus got converted we had three robberies planned out for the following week. We were taking for our companion to help in these robberies that well-known welcher and pickpocket, Harry Dean [to-day an evangelist in the Sydney Central Methodist Mission], but the Lord called me to a more honest and useful work.

'After I was converted the news spread like wild-fire. The police came to hear of it, and they went down to the mission-hall and inquired if it was true, and, being told that it was, they gave a kindly warning to the young preacher to be on his guard against me, as it was only a scheme to further my own ends. The young preacher, feeling convinced that the almighty power of God held me, was quite satisfied that I was under good control. It is just now exactly three years since I thus gave my heart to Christ, and through trusting in Him I have been kept from falling back into an awful life, the so-called pleasures and joys of which are cruel illusions.

'I have only ventured to give you a small portion of my sad life-story. There are many, many crimes and deeds that it would be impossible to publish. What I have thus written is for the glory of that wonderful grace that can "save to the uttermost." It has saved and kept me for three years. And I wish to say in conclusion that if God could save such a sinner as I have been, He can save the worst man, the worst woman, in Sydney.'

This is not the place in which to tell the remarkable story of Charlie's work in this Mission. One day the full story of his life—before and after his conversion—will be written, and it will reveal a record as startling, and in some

respects as successful, as that of Jerry McAuley, New York's apostle to the lost. Suffice it to say that for nearly eight years Charlie Woodward has been in the thick of the fight in the rescue and philanthropic work of the C.M.M. He married one of the Mission's converts, and still continues to earn his own living, giving all his spare hours to the rescuing of the perishing. All these years he has been a leading spirit in our men's meetings, the outcome of the Two-up School Mission ; whilst on a Friday night he runs a meeting of his own—a class-meeting that has no equal in Australia, if in any part of the world. Here are to be found, often in large numbers, men reclaimed from the very lowest and the very worst. The Day of Eternity will alone make known the wonderful scenes witnessed in that Friday-night class-room.

Never have I met Charlie Woodward's superior in dealing with individual men. He is always 'on the job,' as he puts it. He literally 'compels men' to come in to the gospel feast. Only last Sunday night we were having a hard time in our after-service. The power of resistance was in the meeting. Ere long we gained the victory, and it was Charlie who was first seen leading in his man to the inquiry-room. This was soon followed by the outcoming of three young soldiers, who had just returned wounded from the Dardanelles. It is ever thus. Charlie's look, his voice, his touch, and, above all, his manifest sincerity and love, win the day when most others of us seem to fail. Again I ask, What do you make of a gospel that can thus transform a dangerous criminal, a consort of murderers, into a winner of souls? Surely 'this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes'!

From Hell to Heaven.—As to the appropriateness of such a designation, let the character of the following remarkable transformation decide. In some respects the story of J. F.'s conversion is unlike that of any I have ever witnessed. He was an extraordinary man, who had given way to extraordinary sin, and who, by the mercy of God, experienced an extraordinary restoration. He was a Scotchman, the member of a good family ; his brother a professor in one of the Scottish Universities ; and he himself educated in the best schools of Scotland, and designed for one of the

learned professions. During his college career he unfortunately formed a friendship with three young wild-bloods, scions of Scotch aristocratic families. The quartette 'gave themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.' As J. F. himself has told me, they defied alike the laws of God and of man. They deliberately and of set purpose made up their minds to fathom every wickedness, to get at the bottom of every vice. The story is too horrible to be recorded upon this sheet of clean white paper. 'A merry life, if it be a short one,' became their rallying-cry. It was even so; merriment and debauchery were to them synonymous terms, and so deeply did they drink of the forbidden cup that in a very short while three of them filled dishonoured graves, whilst the fourth found his way to Australia—a broken, undone ne'er-do-well, with awful memories of the past haunting him, and literally no prospect before him. How long he was in Sydney I know not, nor can I tell how he managed to live; but this I know. One Sunday night, away back in 1884, a disreputable creature with a haunted look in his face, his clothes in rags, his boots tied with string, and literally without a shirt to his back, shuffled his way to the outskirts of our open-air service at the town-hall corner, and later on stole into the far-away corner of the gallery of the old York Street Church. There he sat, a prey to despair and a hopeless slave to the bottle. The preacher's theme that night was, 'Weighed in the balance and found wanting.' We remember the service well. It was on June 22, 1884, and in the after-meeting there were several conversions. As for poor J. F., as he afterwards told me, he sat the service out in abject misery. At every point, when the scales were filled, he found himself 'light weight.' Ere the after-meeting he crept from the building crestfallen and all but hopeless. All that week he 'lived in hell,' trying to keep clear of the public-house, and crying out, in his weakness and despair, for help, but crying in vain. There seemed to be no voice to hear, no heart to pity. But help was nearer than he knew. After wandering the streets all day he crept into our consecration service on Saturday evening. He sought out a seat behind the people, and as far removed as could be from the gas-lights. In his soul that night 'the battle of Armageddon' was fought over again. He

made no sound, he sought no help ; but there, in the semi-darkness, as he eagerly listened to the words of testimony given by redeemed drunkards, at last hope began to steal into his troubled soul. Towards the end of the meeting we fell upon our knees and, as was our custom, sang through that sweet hymn of consecration :

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,

a verse and a prayer, a verse and a prayer, right through. Before we reached the end this poor lost soul was led to cry, ' O Lord, take me too, a poor lost wanderer. Take me just as I am.' In a moment the work was done ; hell receded, heaven loomed in sight. A strange, mysterious peace stole over the poor man's soul. He felt in his heart that he had been cleansed from his spiritual leprosy. Without saying a word to any one—for he preferred to stand alone in his conflict—he left that room sick and weak in body, ragged in garments, burdened with debt, and without a home. Resolutely he fought his lonely way, inch by inch, but always upward. On the night of his conversion he owed various publicans large sums of money for drink. He honourably paid every farthing. Later on he opened a scrivener's office in the city, and prospered in his business ; and all the while he was ready to testify of the wonderful things that God had done for his soul. Once or twice, at my invitation, he addressed large audiences at our Sunday-afternoon meetings. They were about the ablest and most unanswerable exposures of the evils of gambling I have ever listened to. Years passed, and now he appeared a smart, intelligent-looking, capable Christian man of business. He became a member of one of our city churches, an honoured office-bearer of the circuit, and an outspoken preacher of the truth that once he had defied. Some time ago he was taken ill, was carried to a hospital, and almost before any of us knew of his illness ' he was not, for God took him.' ' A brand plucked from the burning '—that should be the epitaph placed upon his tomb.

A Young Infidel and his Mate.—' The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.' So far as the first part of that quotation is concerned, I dare make no personal

application, but to the latter half I pin my faith this day. For have I not upon a hundred occasions had demonstration of the fact? Is not the C.M.M. itself an illustration? Never have I known of a more remarkable incident illustrating this truth than is furnished by the conversion of two young men—'Jimmy Mills' and 'Charlie Davey' we called them in those days. They are with us still, much-honoured citizens of this noble city, earnest and wonderfully successful toilers in the Master's vineyard. From notes that are before me I wish to tell the story of what took place at the conversion of each, and of what in each case it led to.

It was on a Thursday night away back in 1884—to be exact, August 29. We had been four months at work, and the old church was just beginning to fill up. An unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit compelled us to arrange for a week of meetings. Every day there were numerous conversions. This day there were fifteen. The sermon had been preached, and we were in the midst of a glorious prayer-meeting. Something drew me to speak to a young man sitting near the door of the church. He looked the picture of misery. In a little while I gathered that as a lad he had been a member of a Christian church, but temptation met him, and he fell. He forsook the sanctuary, and joined himself to a local free-thinking club. Now his Sundays were spent in pleasure trips down the harbour, closing with attendance at one of the theatres, listening to vulgar attacks made upon the faith of his youth. 'But, oh, sir,' said the poor fellow, trembling from head to foot, 'from the day I left the church I have never had a day of rest. I'm miserable; I'm miserable!' Naturally I urged him to an immediate surrender to God. But, plead as I would, I could get no response save 'Not to-night, not to-night.'

Just then I was called to the other end of the church. Rising to give out a hymn, I noticed this young man stoop, pick up his cap, and quietly steal out of the church. With a distinctness that startled me there seemed to be a cry in my ear, 'Go after that young man.' Had I paused to argue, what blessing to my own soul, and possibly what untold good to hundreds of others, might have been missed! Strangely enough, there was no thought of questioning. Without a thought of the unconventionality of the thing,

I dropped the hymn-book, left the meeting to take care of itself, and hurried out of the church. By this time the young man was far down the street, and walking at a great rate. Without my hat, after him I ran, and, almost breathless, grasped his shoulder firmly in my hand, and cried out, 'Young man, come—back—and—give—your—heart—to—God—to-night.' For a moment he stood like a man who had been struck, and was dazed. Then, without speaking a word, he suddenly wheeled round, and literally ran along the street, up the stone steps, and along the aisle of the church. When I got in I found him at the communion-rail literally crying unto God for mercy. Oh, how he pleaded for forgiveness! In very deed the fountains of his heart were broken up. For long he wept and prayed for deliverance. We were at our wits' end how to deal with the case. We had done our best, by prayer and Bible statement, to lead him into the light. But everything seemed to fail. The hour was late; most of the people had left the church. Personally I was exhausted with the work of the day. It was suggested that we should sing. Softly, slowly, I started the well-known chorus:

I love Jesus, hallelujah;
I love Jesus, yes, I do.

Half-way through that verse the young man threw up his arms and burst out into a fit of laughter. I was disconcerted, shocked. What could this mean? Was the man, after all, a deceiver? Somewhat roughly, I fear, I said, 'Here, what are you laughing at?' 'Laughing, laughing at? Why, because I can't help it! Glory be to God, it's true, "Jesus smiles, and loves me too." ' It was a band of tired but happy men who left old York Street Church late that night.

Now see what followed. Living in the same house with him was a companion—godless, a blasphemer, and given to strong drink. On his way home the thought of that man's sneers all but robbed young Mills of his new-found joy. 'I daren't tell him; he'll laugh me to scorn, and I'll have a bad time of it.' At length, taking his courage in his hands, he entered the house, and made straight for his friend's room. 'I say, Charlie, old fellow,' he said, 'I

know you'll laugh at me, but I can't help it. I've been down to York Street and given my heart to God.' As Charlie afterwards told us, he was 'all knocked into a heap.' What happened? Let him tell us in his own quaint style: 'Look you here, I just didn't know what to make of it. I was fair staggered-like. After a while I looked Jim square in the face, and says I to him, "Look you here, old chap, if it's the right thing for you to give your heart to God, I think it's just about up to me to do the same!" And so,' he added, 'up I jumped, and was soon down on my two knees, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Ay, and bless His holy name, He just did have mercy on me, and before I got into my bed, glory be to God, I was a saved man.'

And who was Charlie Davey? His grandfather was the famous Cornish evangelist, Billy Bray. The quaint evangelist's biography makes mention of a little lad brought by Billy's daughter for protection against the cruelty of her drunken husband. That little lad was Charlie Davey. Together with a brother and sister, he came out to Sydney, living a godless life until his conversion, soon after which he brought his brother and sister to the C.M.M., both of whom were also led to Christ at its services.

These men are with us to this day. I would fain like to furnish details of Mr. Mills' career—into the class-meeting, on to the worker's plan, as one of the original members of one of our brass bands, and as one of our ablest open-air and inquiry-room workers. For some years past he has been widely known as one of the most popular and successful agents of the Sydney City Mission. Governors and Premiers have presided at annual meetings of his mission-hall, within the walls of which very many of Sydney's poorest have found the same joy as that which came to their honoured leader so long ago in the old York Street Church.

'Charlie Davey,' as he is familiarly called by C.M.M. workers, is still with us, one of the best open-air workers yet produced by the Mission. He retains much of the freshness of his earlier days. In several respects he is a living copy of the original old Cornish evangelist, his grandfather. No meeting may be dull where he is a speaker. Quaint, forceful, epigrammatic, oftentimes humorous and

always vigorous, he can hold any street crowd. His denunciations of sin, his appeals for decision, the recital of his own life-story, his loyalty to the Christ he found in that little room so long ago, all unite in giving him a place among our workers it would be hard to fill.

I confess that, writing at this distance, as memory persists in winging its way back to that memorable night in York Street, I tremble as I think of what might have been the consequences of the failure, even for one short minute, to act upon what was beyond doubt a divine impulse to do the unconventional thing that led young Mills into 'the valley of decision.' I hand on this trembling thought to all young workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

XV

STILL MORE JEWELS FOR THE CROWN OF THE KING

'I never argue'—A squatter's six-months' search—A young gambler—The effect of a song—A mother's prayer answered—An artist modeller—How to save money—A would-be suicide—A publican or a Christian, which?—On the brink—Three fishes on one line—'A passing stranger'—A wonderful deliverance—'Only a handbill'—A necklace of pearls—That bottle of prussic acid—Helped to Christ by a barmaid—'Saint Henry Hall'—'Converting Furnaces'—A journey of 1,300 miles to find Christ.

POSSIBLY to some readers of these pages these living-picture recitals approach the monotonous. If so, they may prefer to turn to the next chapter. I simply dare not close my eyes to the demands of a pile of priceless evidence still lying before me of the marvellous power of divine grace in these far-away modern days to solve every soul-problem, to meet every demand, and to fulfil every promise made on its behalf upon the sacred page. I never argue with any as to the fact of conversion. Why should I? Like the shining of the sun or the freshness of the breeze, the truth is seen upon the surface. A sceptical lawyer one day trotted out the ancient doubt, 'It is not possible for a man to know that his sins are forgiven.' I simply opposed his negative with my positive, 'I know,' and told him the story of my own conversion. His reply was, 'I cannot answer that.' The reason why some 'fishers of men' catch so few fish is that they themselves are hampered with mental reservations when proclaiming the saving truths of our gospel. The physician who is in personal doubt about his remedies will have but few patients. Thank God, the keynote of this Mission's evangel is *certainty*. In the mouth of these further witnesses let this great truth be established.

From a heap of well-attested facts taken from preserved documents I venture to ask attention to the following.

Six Months' Search.—The manager of a large Western sheep-station is taken ill. He had been a thorough man of the world, but now death looks him in the face, and he trembles for fear. He vows that if God will restore him he will lead a different life. His cry is heard, and on leaving his bed he honestly sets about searching for the truth. A clergyman visits the station, but can give no answer to the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' and for months he gropes his way in the dark. Visiting Sydney, he is walking along George Street, portmanteau in hand, seeking his hotel. He is arrested by the Central Mission Singing Band, and a handbill is put into his hands. He follows us to the evangelistic service, and the thought takes possession of him, 'This is exactly what I want.' He comes again on Sunday night, and is amongst the first to come forward as a seeker. Soon light, and then joy, comes. And after witnessing a good confession, he returns to his distant home, his last words to us being, 'I shall now spend my life in working to bring others to that Saviour who has brought joy into my own life.'

Another Squatter.—Whilst busy preparing these sheets for the press I have just had a remarkable demonstration of the truth of the wise man's words, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.' The details of the stirring story come to me from an elect lady of a sister church, but can here only be given in outline. A well-known squatter, coming to Sydney on business, is invited out to his home by a city man. During the evening the host's sister presides at the piano. For a time the squatter and the player are the only ones in the room, when by accident (?), a sweet gospel hymn-tune is played. 'But probably you don't care for music of that kind?' says the good woman, as she turns to her guest. 'But I do,' answers the man in agitated tones. 'I haven't heard that kind for years, and it is just what I want.' Then follows a talk, during which the squatter tells of his soul's unrest; of how, years previously, when in Sydney, he happened

to go to a religious service at the Centenary Hall (then our headquarters), and was made miserable by the sermon he heard. 'I've never,' added he, 'been happy since, and would give a good deal could I find what that preacher spoke of.' Two things followed: the good woman and the squatter there and then went to prayer, and afterwards the promise was given that he would again go to the C.M.M. service. Months afterwards this good woman received a letter from the squatter, stating that he had fulfilled his promise; he had heard the same preacher, and had yielded himself to God. 'To-day' added he, 'I am a Christian and am anxious to do my bit to bring people out here to the Christ I have found.'

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A Young Gambler.—At the close of one of our services an intelligent young man, a Civil Servant, entered our sanctum and said, 'Last Sunday I was attracted to this hall by the announcement that you were going to speak upon "The Gambling Mania." I have been a gambler. For ten years I have never set foot in a place of worship. But, sir, I have done with betting for ever. Last Sunday night I obtained pardon through Christ, and to-night I have brought my wife, and she too has given her heart to God.' This good man at once became an earnest worker, first in the Boys' Club, and then, with his wife, in the Sunday school. Within a month they brought an old gambling friend to the services, who, with his wife, was also converted and at once joined the church. Within another month a third person, an intelligent young lady, was brought by them, and she also laid hold upon Christ, and is now a happy class member in one of the suburbs. 'Such wonders grace can do.'

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The Effects of a Song.—A few weeks since the following experience was given by a fine-looking Swedish sailor at one of our evangelistic services: 'For years I tried to find rest for my heart amid the excitements of worldly pleasure. I left my Christian mother in Sweden and took to sea, and for long led a godless, wild life. Our ship arrived in Sydney two years ago. I was sick at heart, and sought comfort in sin, but all in vain. One night I was wandering along

George Street, when my attention was arrested by sweet singing, and I soon found myself strangely moved whilst listening to the Central Mission workers singing

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me.

'Thought I, "Oh, that is just what I need!" I followed the Mission Band to the old mission-hall in Kent Street. The Rev. Mr. Bowring was in charge of the meeting. There and then I sought until I found the Pearl of great price, and have been happy in my soul and in this work ever since. At once I sent a letter to my poor mother, telling her that her wandering sailor-lad was converted. Oh, my friends, how my heart danced for joy when I received an answer! For long mother was not able to read my letter for tears of joy, and when my sister read the news she fell upon her knees with the cry upon her lips, "If my poor sailor-brother needed saving, so do I!" And, thank God, she too has found Christ. And now,' said the good man with beaming face, 'I am going home to Sweden to tell them about the wonderful experiences of these two years, and I promise you that in my far-away home I shall never forget to pray for the Mission that led me to Christ in Sydney.'

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A Remarkable Answer to a Mother's Prayer.—A few months since, at one of our Sunday-night after-meetings, the preacher was impressed that he ought to go and speak to an anxious-looking young man in the hall. A few kind words were spoken, that was all. Next night, on leaving one of our class-meetings, this young man was found waiting for us in the street, and said he felt encouraged to open his mind to us because of the kind words spoken to him the night before. What a story he told us—a story of wrongdoing, of wandering, and of shame! Next morning we went to the father, and asked him to receive home the poor prodigal. In a moment, with tears in his eyes, he cried, 'Oh, bring back our boy! All we want is to have him home again.' Now comes the remarkable part of the story. From the time that young man left his home his mother, a pious class-leader, knew no rest. Day and night

she pleaded in prayer for him. Ignorant of his whereabouts, she felt impelled to cry, 'Lord, send him to the Centenary Hall.' At the very time I was talking with him that Monday night the mother was weeping and praying for him in a church-meeting in her own circuit. Rising to her feet, she spoke as follows, and her words, says the minister in charge, sent a thrill through the meeting: 'Friends, my boy will be found; I feel that God has answered my prayer. Praise Him! Oh, praise the Lord!' That young man has been in his father's home ever since. Is not Isa. lxxv. 24 still a blessed fact?

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An artist modeller of rare ability found himself stranded in Sydney. After trying in various directions to secure a position, he determined to prepare a piece of statuary in plaster-of-paris representing 'Paradise before the Fall.' Alas, though a recognized work of art of a very high order, the piece was designed to appeal to the lowest passions of man, and was of a kind to be found in undesirable quarters in Continental cities. On nearing completion the artist was offered £60 for the piece. It was finished on a certain Sunday morning. Towards evening the artist was wandering through the streets, and was led to enter the Centenary Hall. The sermon preached made such a deep impression upon his mind that he went back to his room and at once broke the statue to pieces. 'I have done right,' said he afterwards to a friend, 'though it cost me much to do it. And now see how God has rewarded me. Within twenty-four hours I received letters from England, enclosing money enough to take me home, and I am off by the next mail to start afresh in the Old Country!'

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A countryman, who had never previously visited Sydney, came to town with a full purse, resolved upon 'a regular spree,' as he termed it. He arranged to meet an old drinking-companion on arrival, who was to show him round. Fortunately the said companion had been converted at the hall the previous Sunday night, and at once told out the fact. His friend was amazed, and so influenced that he took but one drink the whole week, and left

again for home, leaving the message, 'Tell those Centenary Hall folk that through them I have been saved many pounds.'

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A Would-be Suicide.—I feel tempted to give an extract from a letter received; we have many such in the pigeon-holes of our office: 'I have had a bitter experience for some months past, and I have a story to tell of sin, shame, and sorrow I could not describe. Up to last Sunday I do not believe there existed a man on this earth more utterly lost to all hope both here and hereafter. I came into your service with the feeling that I had forfeited all that makes life dear to a man. I felt too big a coward to commit suicide; but as I listened to your words in the morning, and then in the evening to the Rev. Mr. Tregear, I seemed to realize that all was not lost—there was hope even for me; and after the service I made a full and complete surrender to God.' This good man has joined one of the classes in the Mission. We have much hope concerning him.

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A Publican or a Christian, Which?—One dark night, a steward on board the P. and O. steamer *Indus* left his ship with a view to looking for a suitable investment for his earnings, his wish being to open a public-house in the city. In Pitt Street one of the mission-workers put an invitation slip into his hand, with a kind word of welcome. 'I'll go,' said the man, 'and see what this meeting is like.' He came, and Jesus met him. With a joyous heart he went back to his ship, and at once told the story. Within a few days another, and afterwards a third, steward was brought to the services, both of whom professed conversion. The public-house scheme was at once abandoned, and for several voyages to and fro this good man got together a little band of Christians, and nightly led a prayer-meeting in some quiet nook on deck. His first walk on landing in Sydney was generally either to the parsonage or to 'York Street,' and he always spoke the same words of grateful love of God and of the Mission. Poor fellow, an unfortunate accident now prevents his going to sea. We believe he lives in London, a trustful follower of his Lord.

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On the Brink.—A few Sunday nights since an intelligent well-dressed young man seized us by the hand at the conclusion of one of our services, and with tears in his eyes said, 'I shall for ever have to thank God that I was led into York Street Church. Thank God for the change that has taken place in my whole life!' Who was he? Some five months previously, at one of our Friday-night evangelistic services, two young men were led into the schoolroom from the service on the street. Both were penniless, ill-clad, and hungry. The Word preached and the testimonies given by the new converts reached their hearts, and in the after-meeting, with six others, they were found at the Saviour's feet. Both professed to find Christ. One of them was the son of a deacon in one of the leading Congregational churches in England; the other a nephew of Dr. James Hamilton, of Regent Square renown. He had been educated in the house of a University professor, and came out to Australia to practise his profession as an engineer. Like many another young man in this State, he was led astray by evil association, and when he came to us had just spent his last shilling in dissipation. For some little time we carefully looked after him, until he left for the country. Since then God has blessed him temporally, and he professes still to retain the assurance of his acceptance with God.

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Three Fishes on the one Line.—We cannot refrain from mentioning the following known results that recently attended one of our ordinary George Street open-air services. The writer of these notes was singing a solo from our Mission hymn-book, when a gentleman, a business man in the city, passing by was attracted by the fact that the piece sung had been a favourite song of his mother. In the old country he had been a useful member of our Church and an acceptable local preacher, but for months past had been held by the power of doubt, and was being gradually drawn into the whirlpool of infidelity. The singing of that song brought back with resistless force the memories of former experiences. He went to one of the hotels, and, though not a drinking man, sought to rid himself of feeling by partaking of the intoxicating cup, but in vain. At last he sought us at the church, opened his heart, and went to his

home resolved to get back again his long-lost peace. After days of seeking he again found rest, and, together with his wife has joined our church in one of the suburban circuits, and is resolved to give himself to earnest work for Christ. At the same open-air gathering stood a poor fellow, a victim to the drink fiend, who had formerly been a skilled artisan, and had worked at the ornamental stonework on the pillars of our Newington College. Moved by the addresses of the speakers, he was led to follow us to the mission service, where the Rev. Joseph Woodhouse was the preacher, and was ultimately found amongst the penitents in the inquiry-room. Ere he left he professed to rest his weary heart on Christ. *Early the next morning he was picked up, a lifeless corpse, in the Domain.* At the same gathering was found a mother who, though in years gone by a member of our church, had lost her peace through rebelling against God, in consequence of the sad loss of twelve children by death. A burdened, sorrowful creature, she stood in the crowd, was convinced of sin, and next day sent for the writer, who had the joy of pointing her to Christ. And yet there are Christian people who speak slightly of street preaching! As for us this work, though arduous, is the joy of our life.

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A Passing Stranger.—Some few months since an intelligent young man from one of the better class of boarding-houses in the neighbourhood was induced to come to York Street. Under the sermon preached by the Rev. F. C. Boyer, he, with several others, was convinced of sin. At the communion-rail he pleaded for salvation, and left the church quietly resting upon Christ. A day or two afterwards he left by mail steamer for London. Nothing more was heard of him until a few weeks since a cheering letter reached Mr. Boyer, full of gratitude to God for the knowledge of salvation he had obtained when just on the eve of leaving Australia.

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A Wonderful Deliverance.—At the conclusion of a service a few Sunday mornings since—a service of great blessing, at which two or three penitents trusted in Christ—a middle-aged man rushed forward, threw his arms around the preacher, and, with the tears streaming down his face and

head bowed upon the preacher's shoulder, cried out, 'Oh, thank God I came to church this morning! It has saved me from committing suicide. Oh, is there mercy for me? Tell me, may I hope to be saved?' In the vestry a sad, sad tale was told. The poor man had for some time occupied a respectable position in one of our coast towns. He and several members of his family were members of our Church. In an evil hour he left home on business, was thrown amongst a number of free-thinkers, and gradually was led astray. He flew to drink, and for six weeks was scarcely ever sober. He lost his situation, got involved in debt, and ended by writing home to say farewell to his wife and children, telling them he had resolved to put an end to a life that was an intolerable burden to him. He visited a number of chemists' shops in town to try to procure poison, but failed. As he told the preacher, he could not explain how it was he found himself in church that day, having made up his mind to throw himself into the harbour. The whole sermon seemed meant for him. He trembled whilst he listened, and, acting upon the impulse of the moment, rushed forward as mentioned above. At the service that night he was led to cast himself upon Christ, and went from the church a new man. Early next morning a telegram was sent to the heart-broken wife. He soon left for home, and a little while back wrote us a letter in which he spoke humbly but confidently of having been 'kept by the power of God.'

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'*Only a Handbill!*'—The other Sunday night a 'level-headed man of the world' found Christ in our inquiry-room. When he rose from his knees he felt in his pockets until he found one of our handbills, and then said to the preacher, 'This is what brought me here to-night. I was seeking shelter from the rain under one of the awnings in George Street, when this was put into my hand. On reading it I thought I would come and see what the "People's Service" was like, and, sir, this is the result.' It was 'only a handbill,' but it led a soul to Christ.

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A Necklace of Pearls.—I. A young man, sixteen years of age, began to drink. When old enough he joined the

British Army, then went to sea, and, after wandering round the world, drifted to Sydney. For three years he was drunk four nights out of the seven. He was serving drinks in a Sydney public-house. God smote him, and he gave his heart to Christ in connexion with the C.M.M. He left the bar-room. God completely destroyed the power of the drink habit. He said, 'I put my whole trust in my Saviour, and I knew He would care for me.' That is more than a year ago, and this man is an earnest worker in the Mission to-day.

2. Let the following letter from one of our office pigeon-holes tell its own tale: 'I have had a bitter experience for months past, and could tell a story of sin, shame, and sorrow indescribable. Up to last Sunday I do not believe there existed a man on this earth more utterly lost to all hope both here and hereafter. I came into your service with a feeling that I had forfeited all that makes life dear to a man. I felt too big a coward to commit suicide; but as I listened to your words I seemed to realize that all was not lost; there was hope even for me. And after the service I made a complete surrender to God.' This man at once joined the Mission, and did excellent service as a worker.

3. A poor fellow came into the men's meeting on a Thursday night; he was dirty and ragged. To use his own words when asked where he lived, he said, 'I sleep in the Domain, and live anywhere.' He was soundly converted to God. He had difficulty in getting employment, but it was most interesting to note how he improved in appearance. We remember the first night he appeared at class in a new collar. He was most steadfast in his faith for the two years he was with us, and then he secured a position on one of the South Sea Islands at a salary of £5 per week. He began to conduct Sunday meetings for his fellow workmen, and was styled 'The Missionary.' Last anniversary he sent a donation to the Mission funds.

4. At any time may be seen in our Mission meetings a man with a strong face, quaint in his expressions, and full of enthusiasm. He was a most notorious drunkard, but his vigorous body withstood the abuse to which it had been subjected. He had good employment and a

praying wife. Wild and reckless, he was mad with drink, and on a Sunday morning determined to end his life. His wife—wise woman—cheered him, and quietly prayed for him. That night she persuaded him to come to the Lyceum service. He was wonderfully converted. He says, 'When I was serving the devil I couldn't pass a public-house; I had to go in and drink. But in a moment the Lord took the desire away, and now I am a happy man with a happy home.' His testimony in the Mission's meetings is a delight to hear.

5. 'Thirty years a drunkard,' to-day one of our best mission-hall stewards, and an exhorter on the plan.

6. 'A prodigal son,' saved at one of our services; entered our training home, and ultimately became a minister of religion.

7. 'I am in hell,' cries a man in our office. And, oh, what an awful story he tells! In that office-room he finds salvation. To-day he is a man of wealth, high up in his profession, and circuit steward in a fashionable Methodist circuit in the Homeland.

Another Would-be Suicide.—A miserable, despairing drunkard staggered to the open-air service at 'the corner,' and was induced to come to the Centenary Hall. He had in his pocket a bottle of prussic acid, with which that night he intended to end his wretched life. That bottle is still in the possession of one of our workers. To our surprise we recognized in the poor fellow one whom, years before, we had known in Queensland as a reputable Christian man, a steward and trustee of one of our leading churches. What a terrible story was his! But, thank God, the arm of the Christ reached him as he trembled at the very gates of hell. Kindly hands were held out to him, and step by step he was led to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Ere he left the Centenary Hall that night he found pardon through the Crucified. Immediately he began to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. He became a member of the Mission, and for some months witnessed a good confession before many witnesses. Later on he returned to the Northern State, a redeemed, regenerated man. Gradually he lived down his old evil reputation, and established himself amongst his many friends. We

learn that he has gone from us. His end was one literally of glorious conquest. 'Saved, so as by fire.'

Helped to Christ by a Barmaid.—The Lord never makes a mistake when He is on the look-out for an Andrew through whom to lead a Peter to the Cross. Sometimes His agent is one that we would be the last to employ, but He is always right. One Sunday evening a young fellow went walking, with a barmaid as companion.

'Where are you going to-night?' asks the girl.

'Anywhere you like to take me,' is the careless answer.

'Well then, come along to the Centenary Hall. I often go there on a Sunday night; they give us such good music.'

'All right,' answers the young fellow, evidently thinking they are going to a Sunday-evening concert; and soon they are among the crowd in the top gallery.

Another Sunday arrives, and they are together again. Once more she asks him to go.

'Not I,' is the immediate answer. 'I'm not going to be such a fool as to go there again; they make a fellow feel too uncomfortable.'

'Very well,' answers his companion, 'then I'll go alone.'

Finding she is determined, he yields. The word of God spoken that night is with power, and comes home to that young man's conscience. Soon he is led to his knees, a penitent at the feet of his Lord, and late that night he leaves the building 'a new creature in Christ Jesus.' Several years have passed since that night, but at my last information he was still faithfully following Christ, and was a personal worker in one of our suburban churches.

'Saint Henry Hall.'—A stalwart fellow recently made the following statement to one of our workers: 'I heard the leader at the town-hall corner meeting to-night give an invitation to the Centenary Hall service, and also announce the subject on which the minister was to speak—"God and the Backslider." I came along, little dreaming that here I, a hardened old backslider, was to be restored to the favour of God. I have a mother in heaven, and a wife in Melbourne who is praying for me.' The poor fellow

could not proceed for sobbing. That night he was gloriously and intelligently saved by the God who is 'married to the backslider.'

At that same service another of the men who entered the inquiry-room had been strangely moved by a question put by the preacher: 'Are you going to let the Lord or the devil have you this night?' In a moment the poor fellow cried out, 'The Lord,' instantly jumping upon his feet, and literally running into the room where men and women were being pointed to Christ.

From that same service a marine from one of the warships in the harbour left the hall under the deepest sense of sin. On his way back to his ship he called at the naval House, and asked to speak with the manager. Going with him into the office, he told how he had been to the 'Saint Henry Hall,' and how miserable the sermon had made him. After a long talk he asked the manager to pray with him. Side by side they bowed before the Lord, and then the manager suggested that the lad should pray for himself. His simple prayer for God's forgiveness was followed by this petition, 'O Lord God Almighty, bless that good parson who spoke so straight to my heart to-night, and bless his missus, if he's got one.' Much good advice followed, and the manager believed the lad saw his way to the Cross.

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It would be easy thus to go on filling these pages with records such as the above—records written not with the idea of glorifying any agency save that of the Holy Ghost, and to proclaim to the world, not by abstract statement, but by the unanswerable argument of fact, that in Sydney as in Jerusalem, in the twentieth as in the first century, Jesus Christ possesses the power to forgive sin. 'A living Christ for a dying world'—the C.M.M.'s motto—was never truer of any institution or at any period of the Church's history than, thank God, it is this day in connexion with all the remedial and regenerating agencies of this work.

Enough has been written to explain how it is that throughout all these over thirty years the C.M.M. has maintained a reputation that is probably without an equal in church work in these Southern lands. Sheffields

were, at one time, wont to designate their Methodist chapels 'converting furnaces.' Happy phrase! That was the reputation that this work made for itself in the old York Street days, that passed on to the larger work at the Centenary Hall, and that, thank God, may still be claimed for it in the later and still larger developments at the Lyceum Hall. From every point of the compass people have been in the habit of coming to the Mission's services 'on purpose to get saved.' The good class-leader's prayer, already referred to, 'Lord, send my boy to the Centenary Hall,' is but an illustration of a widespread feeling. I think at this moment of one who travelled 140 miles, and another who journeyed over 300 miles, expressly that in the atmosphere of the C.M.M. they might find the Pearl of Great Price.

A still more remarkable case of this kind is that of one who, at great cost of money and of much self-sacrifice, travelled between 1,300 and 1,400 miles solely in order that here she might find the Saviour. The facts are these. Some years ago, at one of our Sunday-evening services, an intelligent young farmer from New Zealand was brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The case was one full of interest, and we were overjoyed to see the manner in which, step by step, he was ultimately led into the joy of conscious salvation. For several weeks he witnessed a good confession, and then all at once mysteriously disappeared. We were a good deal perplexed and disappointed at what looked like 'another case of failure.'

The fact, however, was that the young man was engaged to be married to a young woman in distant New Zealand. A sudden yearning took possession of him that his fiancée should also find the Saviour. Yielding to a sudden impulse, he took a steamer for Auckland, 1,300 miles away. Startled by the change she saw in her lover, and still more so at the strange story he had to tell her, the young woman became interested, and ultimately anxious to find the same blessed experience. She was a Roman Catholic, and knew absolutely nothing of the great doctrine of personal regeneration. To her oft-repeated cry, 'What, oh, what shall I do?' her lover

suggested that she should consult her priest. To her spiritual adviser she told her tale, with tears in her eyes and a tremor in her voice.

'Och, sure, my girl,' answered his reverence, 'you are a bit off. Your nerves are surely queer. You must steady yourself now; you must steady yourself. Look you here, my girl, you just go home and take a drop o' whisky. It will help to put you right, sure it will.'

Distressed, she went to her father and mother, both humble-minded, faithful Romanists. They were much perplexed as she told of her trouble of soul, but had no message of comfort to give to their loved child. They had never heard it for themselves.

The young man who had thus acted the part of a John the Baptist, and aroused within her soul the sense of its danger, somehow failed to lead her as he had been led.

'I tell you what it is,' said she one day to her startled lover, 'I'll go to Sydney, to the same place where you found the Saviour. I seem somehow to feel that there I too shall get the same experience as is yours.'

Surely enough, together they took passage and sailed for four days across the great Tasman Sea. On the next Sunday evening they sat side by side. I think I can see them at this moment as I saw them that night. They were in the gallery of the hall, within a few yards of the rostrum. And how eagerly they listened to every word that was uttered by the preacher!

At ten o'clock next morning I was busy in my office, when a knock was heard at the door. In response to my call these two young people entered. Soon the story they had travelled so far to tell was poured out, and my advice was sought. Here was a case not so much for talk as for prayer. In a few minutes we were kneeling side by side at my office table. With all my soul I prayed for that young woman's salvation. Then the young man ventured to pray—so falteringly, and all but overcome with feeling. After a little I suggested to the anxious one, 'Now, suppose you try to pray yourself!'

Gentle reader, have you ever seen a soul converted? Yes, I mean *seen* a soul converted. In this case, overawed by what I felt to be the presence of the Holy Spirit, I watched this young soul in its struggles towards the light.

Trembling from head to foot, she tried to pray. Her words were so simple, and yet so sweetly earnest: 'O Lord, I am a sinner; Lord, I am a sinner. . . . Tell me, what must I do? . . . Thou art a Saviour. . . . Oh, yes, Lord, Thou art a Saviour.' Touching her on her arm, I suggested, 'Try to say, "Thou art *my* Saviour."' For a little while she hesitated, and then burst out, 'Oh, yes, Lord Thou art *my* Saviour . . . *my* Saviour . . . mine!' And then, with an outburst of gladness, she turned to me and said, '*Oh, sir, I feel I am saved.*' In a moment the great work was done, and this poor troubled soul was at rest.

Some years afterwards I journeyed to New Zealand to open a Central Mission-hall. These good people—now man and wife—came to the city to see me, and told how they had maintained their hold on Christ, and were now happily engaged in Christian work in connexion with one of our churches.

'Such wonders grace can do!'

XVI

AN AUSTRALIAN 'SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS'

How the Training Institute was started—A Spartan test—How the Home was dedicated—Its curriculum—The Rev. P. J. Stephen's testimony—Where are the men?—Our first experiment—Champion boxer—An infidel's son—A bush-boy's transformation—From a gambler's den to a Christian pulpit—Over a hundred-and-fifty trainees.

I HAVE just returned from a religious service at which it was a joy to me to listen to the preacher, a man who has won his way into the front rank of our ministers. His sermon was rich in illustration, fervent, evangelical, rather lucid than deep, with a tender spirit of appeal running through it all that gripped and moved one. To-day the superintendent of one of our suburban circuits, he has spent his best years in the management of widely spread and important country centres. I think it is safe to affirm that but for the C.M.M. that man and others like unto him would possibly never have found their way into the Methodist ministry. Let me, therefore, hasten to tell the story of a development in church work that has opened the door to many a young fellow otherwise ill prepared for the mission to which he has been called.

Not long had the Mission been at work when it was discovered that the Lord was again and again flinging into our lap treasure—gold in the rough—that we did not know what to do with. Numbers of splendid young fellows were being brought as recruits into the King's service—men in the crude state, uneducated, unconventional, but full of promise for the future. If only we had a Home in which to train them! The thought was a bold one; its very audacity to-day causes one to wonder. We prayed and pondered, we consulted and agitated, until at last the Committee resolved to make a venture.

True, there was nothing in the Southern World that could guide us. But there was Thomas Champness and his 'Joyful News Mission,' with its Home for young evangelists. That gave us our key. If in Rochdale this thing could succeed, why not in Sydney? Anyhow, it was resolved to hazard an attempt. Two flats, away up four and five stories above the street, were furnished, one as a dormitory, and the other as a common-room. On a never-to-be-forgotten Saturday night in April, 1889, after a remarkable 'meeting of the clans' downstairs, about fifty of us essayed to climb those stairs to dedicate to the service of God and of the Methodist Church our first Evangelists' Training Institute. We formed ourselves into a ring round that large and beautiful room, and, with hand joining hand in one continuous chain, we solemnly consecrated this infant thought to God.

'Small and feeble' at first, this work has grown to become one of the most successful features of the C.M.M. operations, and has furnished a model that both Melbourne and Adelaide have been pleased to copy. Possibly our programme at first was crude; at any rate it was effective. To test the quality of our applicants, we resolved that they should keep tidy their own rooms, prepare their own breakfast and tea, going out to an adjoining restaurant to dinner. As the Hon. E. Vickery used to say, 'If a young man is not prepared to wash up pots and pans, he is no good for us.' And he was right; we wanted to test the metal of which these men were made from the very foundation. Some failed us; the work was *infra dig.*; they were minus the Spartan spirit, and so they slipped out of the ranks. But for the most part the men stood the strain, and have—scores of them—made splendid men.

What was our curriculum? To-day one can afford to smile at its crudities; still, it did its work, as not a few men who are to-day in the forefront of the work of the Christian Church can verify. Of necessity the studies had at first to be overlooked by myself and colleague, with intermittent help from outside. The mornings of the men were devoted to study; every afternoon to home visitation, gospel work on the ships or wharves, meetings in factories, regular visitation in the hospitals of the city,



Open-air Meeting.



Dispatching *Our Weekly Greeting*.



Sick Visitation.



At Study.



Releasing Workmen's Tools.



Visiting in the Slums.

C.M.M. EVANGELISTS AT WORK.

and work amongst the cabmen, tramwaymen, and warehouse caretakers. Every night, indoors or out, they were engaged in evangelistic or other meetings of the Mission. As the years have advanced, so the character of the men's studies has improved, and to-day is under the control of tutors able to impart instruction in theology, homiletics, English, mathematics, history, elocution, and practical evangelism. No man has done more for this work than the Rev. P. J. Stephen. In an article from his pen that lies before me, Mr. Stephen speaks of three things that are necessary, 'in addition to the good raw material of personality, in young men who offer for the ministry of the Church in times like these. They are spirituality, experience, culture.' He adds: 'The young man who enters the Training Institute comes into an atmosphere that will call out the best that is in him. I speak with perfect frankness when I say that in all my twenty-six years in the Methodist ministry I have never seen a church in which the spiritual life was so intense and the atmosphere so radiant as in the Central Mission.' Later on in the same article Mr. Stephen quotes the late Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, for so many years editor of *The Methodist Recorder*, who, writing of Cliff College, says: 'Cliff has the gift of discernment! It can try the spirits. It can see if there is in the man that which, under helpful conditions, can be brought out, and built up, and fired with the glory of the Lord. It selects, regardless of station or means, the likeliest, not necessarily of attainment, but of promise; the men who, give them a chance, will grow strong, persuasive, soul-saving preachers.' 'These words,' adds Mr. Stephen, 'might have been written of the C.M.M. Training Institute.' To Mr. Stephen's estimate I would add the words of the author of *The History of Methodism in New South Wales*. 'We know,' writes he, 'of no other place in Australia where equal advantages are offered, or where young men can gain a better insight into the successful methods of evangelistic effort.'¹

At this moment there lies before me a photographic group of nine of the men who were amongst the first to enter the Institute for training. Of these the preacher of this morning faces me. Three others are in our ministerial

¹ Colwell's *History*, p. 539.

ranks. One is doing excellent work as a Baptist minister. Two others became Home Missionaries—one in Australia, the other in England. The remaining two essayed to enter our ministry, but for some mysterious reason were unsuccessful. We have, as a Church, lost much thereby. One of the two is to-day a much-beloved minister of the Congregational Church, whilst the other 'passed over to the Anglican Church, graduated at the Sydney University, and finally became assistant tutor at the Church of England Training College, where he had previously a distinguished career, winning a scholarship each year.'

A still more interesting photographic group lies on my table. It is that of twenty-two young men who have passed through the Institute. Fourteen of them are to-day giving an excellent report of themselves in the ministry of our own Church; one is in the Anglican ministry; three entered our Home Missionary field; three are doing good work as local preachers; whilst one—our honoured and sainted Brother Pittendrigh—after completing a successful probation in our ministry, went at the call of duty to Gallipoli, where, like a true hero, he literally sacrificed his life in seeking to rescue others. Of those in the ministry, one has been for several years our Conference evangelist; another, after passing through one of the American Universities, is to-day at work in one of the Conferences of the Union; and others are superintendents of important circuits in one or other of the Australian States. I have given careful thought to the personnel of this group, and do not hesitate to say that by far the majority of these men would, in all probability, never have found their way into their present spheres but for the preliminary training made possible to them through the work of this Institute. In, and through, and above all it has been the object of the Home to send out evangelists—that first and foremost, and then whatever the Church may ask from them afterwards.

Would time and space permit, it would be interesting to furnish details of the career of many of our men. I must content myself with but a handful—specimens of much of which one would fain have wished to speak at length.

A farmer's son from the bush came to us crude and

unfurnished. For some time he was our despair; but gradually revealed powers of no ordinary character. He lived in the atmosphere of prayer, literally praying his way through his difficulties. Up to his coming amongst us the Sydney Hospital had been closed against our evangelists. He sought admission, and failed. Again and again the doctors refused his request to visit the patients. Determined to succeed, he went to prayer, and spent all one night waiting upon God. At three o'clock in the morning he rose from his knees, confident that his prayer was heard, and that the door would be opened. See what followed. During the day he again knocked at the door of the doctor's room, and presented his request just as if no refusal had ever been made. Strangely enough, permission was freely given. Not long passed before the attention of the doctors was directed to the work of that lad. Over and over again patients who were considered hopeless cases improved, as the medical men confessed, largely through his influence. Mystified, they arranged for an interview with the young man. 'Tell us,' said they, 'what is the secret of your remarkable influence with so many of the patients?' With the utmost simplicity he answered, 'I don't know. Only this, I am very happy in the love of Jesus. I tell the patients about it, and try to get them to love Him'; and then he quaintly added: 'Perhaps, gentlemen, it's just this, what's good for the soul may be found to be good for the body as well.'

A year afterwards, on the occasion of the opening of our Home for 'Sisters of the People,' I called upon the matron of the hospital to secure permission for our Sisters to visit the patients. Her reply was remarkable: 'Yes, Mr. Taylor, by all means let them come, but, please, any day but Monday.' 'Why not Monday?' I asked in surprise. 'Well,' said she, 'you will smile at me perhaps, but look here, there is a tall young man who comes every Monday. Who he is and where he comes from we do not know, but the doctors particularly wish that he should not be interfered with.' That 'tall young man' was our young evangelist.

Towards the end of his term with us I one day sent for him to the office. I told him that a distant country circuit

had written asking for one of our evangelists to go and conduct a series of mission services, and asked him to go. At first he was ready to drop. 'Sir, I could never go. I've never conducted a mission.' My answer was, 'It is you or nobody; go and pray about it.' Many hours were spent on his knees, and at last he returned to the office with a smile upon his face. 'I'll go, sir.' And go he did. To a friend he mentioned that he had prayed for one hundred souls. The weather was bad, the nights were cold, but on he trudged. Night after night he toiled for several weeks, *but he got his one hundred.* That man has done yeoman service in our ministry in Australia, and is to-day in charge of an important country circuit.

Down a narrow alley in George Street, almost under the shadow of St. Andrew's Cathedral, there stood for a number of years a low-down boxing-saloon that was a disgrace to the city. Here night after night the devil held high riot. The lowest of the low resorted thither to drink, to gamble, and to witness demoralizing prize-fights. Not the kind of soil this that you would expect would produce evangelists. But it was even so. A fine young fellow, the son of well-to-do people in Staffordshire, had somehow become infatuated with the gloves, and soon found himself drifting into the ring. Active, supple, brainy, he soon made a name for himself, and ere long became the champion light-weight boxer of New South Wales.

How he found his way one Sunday night into the Centenary Hall I do not know. But that visit settled his destiny. Once within that building, listening to hymns he had been wont to sing in other days, a strange yearning took possession of him. In the after-meeting he was among the penitents, and left the building 'a new man in Christ Jesus.' That week found him at one of the class-meetings. Soon he was on the workers' plan, and about a year afterwards was received into the Training Institute. At the end of two years' training he was received as an agent of the Connexional Home Missionary Society, and served on several stations. For eight years he was stationed at one important centre, nursing it so well that it became a flourishing circuit, and only at the last Conference was divided into three circuits. Latterly our good brother has filled an important appointment in one of our

governmental departments, and continues to serve the Church as an acceptable local preacher.

A precocious boy finds his way into the C.M.M. Sunday school, and at one of our services gives his heart to God. On making inquiries it is found that his mother is a godly woman, but his father a free-thinker, and one of the outspoken, aggressive type. At one time he had been a local preacher, but for years had been known as a 'Domain orator,' a Socialist of the most advanced type. For a lad to maintain his religion in such an atmosphere indicates that the root of the matter was in him. Soon he graduated from scholar to teacher, thence on to the workers' plan, was nominated as a local preacher, and soon offered as a candidate for the Training Institute. During his residence he made rapid progress as student and evangelistic worker. It was no unusual thing to hear father and son addressing crowds in the Domain within sound of each other's voices. But for the failure of his health he would have sought entrance into the ministry. As it was he did excellent work as a Home Missionary, and is to-day serving the Church in that capacity in South Australia.

I am thinking of another young fellow brought up under the mountains in the north of this State, a simple-minded farmer's son. His conversion and early efforts to prepare himself for Christian work were such as to lead his friends to arrange that he should come to us for training. Though over twenty years of age, he had never been in a town, never seen a railway-train, never set foot even upon one of the river steamers running within twenty miles of his birthplace. But he could pray, and was beginning to preach; and the stuff was there out of which the best of men are made. In Sydney he was beloved for his simple, artless faith and for the unbounded enthusiasm with which he strove to win people for Christ. After two years of training with us he was accepted as a candidate for the ministry, and is now doing effective service as the superintendent of one of our widespread country circuits.

A beautifully-written letter one day reached the office. It was from a young man living in what we in Australia know as 'the way back.' His father was a bush school-master; the home was far removed from any town—buried in the bush. The young man was a Christian,

eager to work, but with no opportunity, rarely even hearing a sermon. We resolved to give him his chance. He arrived, an attractive-looking fellow, but with the most primitive ideas of men and things. Sydney was a mystery to him, but like a ferret he worked his way into everything, and was soon one of the most successful men in the Home. His love for children and for seamen was abnormal. Suddenly his prospects appeared to be utterly ruined. At a country appointment an accident with a fractious horse so seriously injured him that he was laid up in hospital for nearly six months. With a calm, cheerful faith he faced the depths. I question if he will ever preach sermons equal to those which came from that sick-bed. He never wavered in his purpose; never a word of repining passed his lips. That man to-day is being made a blessing to many as a probationer in one of our very difficult country districts.

The temptation is strong upon me thus to write on. But other spheres claim attention. Just one other illustration, however—and it is a remarkable one—of the kind of man to whom the doors of our Institute have so frequently been thrown open. I confess that rarely have I been more perplexed than I was one day when pondering a letter that lay before me. It was couched in the crudest terms, with spelling and grammar of the worst; and yet a spell was upon me as I read. The thought came, 'If one only dare!' But the thing seemed to be so completely outside the ordinary. Here was one of Sydney's most notorious pickpockets and welchers seeking admission into our Evangelists' Training Institute. The thing savoured of the preposterous, and yet——! The man had recently been converted, and converted in a most remarkable manner. But still——! I was at my wits' end. Later on I took my courage in my hand, and went to the Committee with that letter. There was no denying the sincerity or the earnestness of the young fellow, and at last, on the principle of 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' it was resolved to give him a trial, 'purely as an experiment.'

That you may know something of the kind of material we had to work upon, I will ask him to tell his own story. From a pamphlet afterwards written by him, and distributed by thousands, entitled *From a Gambler's Den to a Christian*

Pulpit, I venture to give the following unique statement :

'It is just sixteen years since I laid my first wager on a race-horse. I was then but a boy of twelve, and, alas, I remember the time but too well. Unfortunately for me, I won the bet. I put half-a-crown on the tote, and received twelve-and-sixpence in return. Naturally, after this, gambling seemed to me to be the best game in the world, so I went in for it hot and strong, holding the idea that I was about the shrewdest boy living.

'Before long the race-course was not big enough for me. I wanted to make money fast, so I found my way to "The Alley" and "Pak-ah-poo" shops and the like. The first "Two-up School" I entered was well known as one of the most notorious gambling hells in Sydney, and which I proved later on to be a stepping-stone to the prison-cells to many of the young men who frequented it. On I went at a very rapid rate from bad to worse. My good luck soon began to give out, or, to use sporting slang, I became "dead stiff."

'Upon leaving my work on a certain Saturday I ran as fast as I possibly could to Randwick race-course, hoping to be in time for the first race, which, to my now great regret, I succeeded in doing, as I soon lost all my money and some one else's too. Being greatly worried as to how I should manage to pay my debts, I decided to pawn my clothes, which is quite a common occurrence among gamblers, and so give my money another chance. Away I went with my suit to "Uncle's" and pledged it for fifteen shillings, and found my way to "The Alley," where, instead of getting my money back, I lost everything. Never will the feeling that came over me that night be forgotten. In desperation I threw up my work, and then my wild and wretched life rapidly grew worse. I sank down deeper and deeper into sin, and turned my back on all that was honest and good. I entered a race stable to be trained for a jockey, but very soon left it, and was then employed by men of the very lowest type—sometimes to hold the board for the "walnut" sharpers, at other times watching the police for the "three-card tricksters"; sometimes acting as "corner man" in the prize-fighting ring, at other times assisting pickpockets in their wretched work. I had at that time the reputation

of being able to pick persons' pockets "while they were winking."

'At this period of my life a certain class of degraded people formed what was termed "the out-and-outers." A place on the outside of the race-course would be fixed upon where great crowds of low-down people congregated to gamble on the races; the fee to go inside the race-course being too high, these people were content to remain outside.

'This body of men, women, and children employed a few others to obtain "scratchings" and the name of the winner of each race. You could bet from a threepenny-piece to a sovereign on any event. In a very short time this place became a nest of crime. I have seen assault and robbery committed as many as a dozen times in one afternoon. Among this crowd you would find the Chinaman, Indian, Jew, burglar, bludger, tip-slinger, "tale-teller," welcher, harlot, pickpocket, jail-bird, and, indeed, men and women of all descriptions, including many kinds of bookmakers, some of whom would pay, and others of whom would not. I generally happened to be amongst those who would not pay.

'As a welcher, I have been chased off almost every race-course in and around Sydney, sometimes by the police and often by my "clients"—that is, the men and women with whom I used to bet. On one or two occasions I narrowly escaped the fate of poor McLeod on the Flemington race-course.'

'I was commonly known as "Corky Dean" or "Tom the Grouter." The greater part of my nights would be spent in various "alleys" where were congregated the scum of Sydney. The morning was my sleeping time, and I would be at the races in the afternoon. This wretched mode of life was continued year in and year out. My life became so miserable that I felt that I was fit for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. God has indeed dealt very mercifully in preserving me from the fate of some of my associates. Some of those I have in my mind as I write this are to-day serving terms of

¹McLeod was a notorious Victorian welcher, who was set upon by a mob of gamblers on the race-course, and cruelly murdered. The case, at the time, produced a profound sensation throughout Australia.

imprisonment ranging from six months to ten years; others are in the insane asylums; two have been hanged.

‘There was, as may be supposed, no rest for me, leading such an awful life as this. I was haunted by my outraged conscience and by the terrors of a cold prison. Every knock at the door I thought was that of the policeman after me. My pillow was like one of thorns, and I knew that by my drunken, gambling, reckless life I was gradually killing my mother and disgracing the family.

‘But, thank God, there came a time in my life when the Holy Spirit of God began to strive with me. I knew that my own godly mother was praying for me.

‘On a certain never-to-be-forgotten evening, in a way that it is impossible for me to explain, I was led to attend a meeting held in a little Church of England mission-hall in Hudson Street, Redfern. There were about thirty of us who went in that night. It was a bitterly cold winter’s night, and we were glad to get in for the shelter. During the evening we were provided with hot cups of tea and cake. I shall never forget the earnestness of the preacher that night. With tears streaming down his cheeks he told us the story of Jesus, and how He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. He gave out an invitation for all those who wished to forsake their sins to stand up, and fifteen of the worst men that I have ever known there and then rose to their feet, including my special mate. This same man had three robberies planned that week. He and others actually intended to steal the organ out of this very hall on the following Sunday evening; ¹ but, praise the Lord, the devil overstepped his mark that time, and one of his best agents that very night was won for Jesus Christ. I stood up that night myself among the rest, but soon fell back again.

‘God in His wondrous love still continued to speak to me. Oh, how I tried to drown His voice! It was of no use. At last the victory over Satan and all his host was won. It was a Sunday night, and a jockey and myself found ourselves seated inside the Redfern Congregational Church listening to the Rev. F. Pratt, M.A., telling the people how Christ cleansed the leper, gave sight to the

¹ See above, p 170.

blind, and raised the dead. He then pleaded that if there were in that room one poor, blind, sinning, lost soul who wanted Jesus, he should rise. In a second my companion and I were on our feet. I cannot possibly describe how it was that I was converted that night, only this: with all my soul I cried out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Thank God, I am another illustration of the fact that that prayer is never, never offered in vain.

'There wasn't much left of me after all my awful sinning life; but, thank God, He that night took what there was, and I went down to my house a saved, a forgiven man.'

Like Charlie Woodward, this man was attracted to the C.M.M. by the work of our 'Two-up School Mission.' He joined one of our classes, and came on to the plan as a worker. His entrance into the Training Home caused a good deal of talk at the time. But it was of God, and consequently everything turned out right. He studied hard, prayed much, and worked successfully among his old 'pals,' and others, and was made a blessing to many. At the end of the year he passed a surprisingly good local preachers' examination, and came on to full plan. Another year, and he was sent out into the country as a circuit missionary. Later on circumstances led him to accept a position as slum missionary in connexion with the Church of England.

Enough has thus been written to justify the opening of this Training Home. In all, over one-hundred-and-fifty young men have been in residence, and every year the Mission, through it, sends forward well-prepared men as candidates for the ministry.

XVII

TWENTIETH-CENTURY ANGELS

Yes, 'Angels'!—A tower of strength—The first in the Southern world—The thrilling story of its origin—All night in prayer—A 'Home' given to us—How it was furnished—A collection of £450—'An Order of Nuns'—The work of Sister Francis—'Hand-picked'—Our Irish sister—'What shall I more say?'—Startling figures.

'ANGELS?'

Yes, and why not? If in the first, why not in the twentieth century? If in one sphere, why not in another? If an angel be 'a ministering spirit,' 'a human messenger with a divine commission,' 'any person of angelic qualities,' then surely I am in order in electing to designate those consecrated, self-sacrificing women of the Central Mission known as 'Sisters of the People' by so choice a title! For twenty-eight years they have lived and toiled among us. In season and out of season, in rain and sunshine, by day and by night, these messengers of mercy have been as lights in the darkest of dark places. Through most of these years I have been with them, the partner of their joys, a sharer with them in their griefs. They have been pleased to call me 'Father.' I know them as few, if any, could know them; and I wish here to write down with the utmost frankness that I believe Sydney would have been a poorer place to live in this day had these women never toiled in it. During this over a quarter of a century more than one hundred of these 'Angels of the Church' have passed through the C.M.M. Home, nearly all of them have been good, many better than good, whilst a few have been as Sister Dora in Birmingham—a perfect tower of strength to every cause of mercy, and as 'the shadow of a great rock' to many of the weary and the sinning ones of our city.

To this C.M.M. belongs the honour of having established

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the first Protestant sisterhood in the Southern World. Archdeacon Langley, now the popular Bishop of Bendigo, once paid us this compliment: 'For years we Anglicans have talked all round this thing. In the meanwhile you Methodists have done it, and now we are arranging to follow in your footsteps.' The story of its origin reads like a romance. I have never met with one quite like unto it. Link by link the providential chain is so complete as to leave no manner of doubt as to the divine origin of this blessed Christlike branch of Christian work.

Away back in the year 1889 we issued a manifesto declaring the Mission's objectives. It included as an important probable development the establishment of 'A Sisters' Home.' Some weeks afterwards I was startled by the receipt of a letter from a young woman in Grafton: 'Is that Home ready? I want to come in as one of the Sisters.' We had only recently established the Seamen's Mission, and still later the Evangelists' Training Institute; and I was compelled to reply that the Sisters' Home at present was merely a proposal that might eventuate in the course of a year or two. Six months passed, and one Sunday evening, going into my office before commencing the People's Service, I found a letter upon my desk. A strange influence came over me as I read it; to this day I cannot explain the feeling. I went to my knees and spread that letter before the Lord, and cried out, 'Lord, tell me what we ought to do.' Some time afterwards I paid a visit to Grafton, and had tea at the home of the parents of the writer of that letter. After tea the mother said, 'Come this way; I have something I want to show you.' Walking along the verandah, she opened the door of a little room, and, pointing in, said to me, 'That is the place where Laura spent the whole night in prayer before she wrote you that letter.' No wonder that the reading had moved me so strangely. In answer to my cry for help, it seemed as if a voice spoke in my ear, 'Take that letter and read it to the congregation.' I thank God to-day that I was obedient to that impulse. The letter was a pathetic appeal to the Church of her fathers to provide a sphere in which she could devote her life to the service of her fellows. 'If my own Church cannot open its door to me, I must go to the Salvation Army. But

I want to work in the Church that has done so much for me.' Acting on the impulse of the moment, holding the letter before me, I said, 'Friends, if to-night you will provide me with sufficient money to cover one year's salary, I will promise that this young woman shall be engaged. The steward will be at the door to receive your contributions.' The service was over, we had many penitents, and now I was putting on my coat to go home—a weary man—when in came the steward smiling all over his face. I have seen enough of circuit stewards to know that when they smile you may be sure the finances are all right. 'How much do you think I have got? The people have promised me £76.' With an outburst of 'Glory be to God!' I went home. That week the Committee was called together, and I told my story. The brethren were amused. 'What are you going to do with the young woman when you get her?' At once I propounded my plans. There was a small schoolroom adjacent to the parsonage. This I proposed to divide into cubicle rooms. 'Then, perhaps,' I ventured to suggest, 'we may be able to accommodate two Sisters.' Remember, the C.M.M. was in its infancy, and funds were low. The wise men shook their heads and laughed. At length one of them—of whom I have more to say elsewhere—said, 'No, I do not like the suggestion. But I tell you what I will do. If Mr. Taylor will undertake to furnish it without coming on to the general funds for help, I will give you a three-story house free of rent.' This time I did not shout 'Glory be to God!' for we were in Committee; but I felt it all the same. At once my wife called together the Ladies' Committee, and the facts were stated. 'Will you provide that furniture, ladies?' They literally sprang to the work, and within a fortnight had scoured the city and secured enough with which comfortably to furnish the whole house, including six bedrooms.

And now the laugh went outside, 'What folly is this?' Certain people asked, 'A big house furnished, and only one young woman to put into it. Aye, and where will you get the money with which to keep it going?' Well, listen to this. Before the day of opening arrived we received exactly applications enough to fill the house. They were all of them suitable, and all of them were

engaged, and every one of them turned out to be eighteen-carat gold. The opening day, in the month of July, 1890, will never be forgotten. When the key was turned, the house filled with curious but sympathetic people, who that afternoon gave us a collection of £450—*enough to pay the expenses of the Home for twelve months.* And during all these twenty-eight years that branch has never wanted for funds.

Naturally this venture, so new in Australian church enterprise, occasioned food for comment. Many commended ; but Mrs. Grundy had her friends, and they were by no means silent. One powerful country newspaper published a leader on 'The Romeward tendency of Methodism,' severely criticizing us for establishing 'an order of nuns.' Gradually, however, the new venture worked its way into the affections of people, both inside and outside the Church. Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, and New Zealand ere long followed suit, and to-day 'Sisters of the People' are a recognized and much-honoured institution not only in all our great Central Missions, but in many of our larger circuits, as also in sister communions.

A book of thrilling interest could be written detailing the work done during these years by many of these sisters. Let me, in brief, trace the career of one of them, our beloved Sister Francis, the Grafton young woman whose prayers and whose pleading letter led to the establishing of the sisterhood. For six years she was 'in labours more abundant' with us, winning her way into a hundred homes, doing slum work of a most prosaic and even repulsive character, a tower of strength within the Mission, and in its rapidly growing rescuing agencies exerting an influence that was of a blessed character. Then, for a time, she left us to fill an important position as matron of a Girls' Rescue Home in New Zealand ; from there going to a still more responsible position in New York under the well known Rev. Samuel H. Hadley, so long at the head of the Water Street Mission. After a time spent later on in the Homeland, helping at many of the meetings of the great Welsh revival, she returned to us, and was engaged as the travelling evangelist of the C.M.M. In her missions many hundreds have been brought to God ; numbers of her converts are to be found filling official positions in

the Church, and several have entered the ranks of the ministry.

Some of our best Sisters are those who were converted in the Mission itself, 'hand-picked,' as Dr. Dale would have put it. Of these I think of Sister Mabel, a quaint, vivacious Irish lassie, who soon won all hearts, and gathered many a trophy for her Lord. She was converted at one of our Sunday-evening services, and soon became passionately anxious to see her many brothers and sisters brought to Christ. At her conversion she stood alone, but gradually, one by one, she brought her dear ones to the Cross. She journeyed home to Ireland in the hope of winning her mother and youngest brother, and was successful in her object. To-day every member of her large family is a Christian, one of them being in the ministry through the aid given by the C.M.M. Evangelists' Training Institute. Can it be wondered at that, as a 'Sister of the People' she soon made a mark in Sydney? I have never known any one more absolutely given over to the work of God than she was. Her name will be as ointment poured forth in the district of Miller's Point for many a day to come.

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Sister Florence, 'the young woman's friend,' and to-day the mourning young widow of that hero of Gallipoli, the late Rev. R. R. H. Pittendrigh; of Sister Bibby, who, after twenty-five years of constant, ungrudging service, has just been called home; of Sister Rosa, so quiet, so persuasive, so constant; of Sisters Edith and Amy, still with us, with hearts yearning to reach and save their erring sisters; of Sisters Gannon, Thompson, and Purser, each of them to-day the wife of a successful minister of the gospel. My pen would fain write on and on, of these and of many others who in slum and home, in Sunday-school and at street-corner, in factory and inquiry-room, in hospital and jail, in police-court and in Chinese opium-den, among the denizens of 'red-light town' and the frequenters of the gin-palace, among all sorts and conditions of people, have toiled for the creation of a cleaner, stronger citizenship and for the advancement of the Kingdom of their Lord. Yes, they are in very deed twentieth-century angels of the Church of God, for

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whose coming amongst us we never cease to praise God.

The following figures, culled from a recent Annual Report, will furnish some idea of the extent of ground covered by the work of the evangelists and Sisters of the Mission :

Total number of Services and Meetings conducted by Sisters and Evangelists during the past twelve months					1,841
Including Public Services					349
Open-air Services					58
Men's Meetings					25
Children's Meetings					24
Mothers' Meetings					46
Factory Meetings					369
Fellowship and Prayer-meetings					167
Girls' Brigade Meetings.. .. .					23
Christian Endeavour Meetings.. .. .					24
Seamen's Concerts					50
Visits to Homes.. .. .					4,484
" " Ships					602
" " Persons in Hospitals					5,360
" " Other Sick People					404
" " Cabmen, &c.					665
" " Public Schools (by Evangelists only)					74
" " Common Lodging-houses					564
" " Police-courts					420
" " Jails and other Public Institutions					366
" " Hotels					2,101
" " New Converts					201
Persons dealt with in Inquiry-rooms					233
Converts other than above					30
Letters written to Converts					1,067
Assistance given to Poor People (by Sisters and Evangelists)					341
Persons sent to Rescue Homes and other Institutions					46
Work obtained for People (by Evangelists)					21

XVIII

THE GIRL OF THE KERBSTONE

A Rescue Home of the old type—Sydney's responsibility—Three thousand girls on our streets—Our proposed scheme—An ideal location—Lady Rawson opens—Queen Alexandra's letter—A well-set-up Home—Our objectives—Mrs. Grundy again at work—Sister May—'A free hand'—'Wanted, common sense'—A much-prized photograph—Religion our Alpha and Omega—A notorious case—The story of 'Queenie.'

When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, 'No man, Lord.' And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.—
ST. JOHN.

THE other day I was taken over a Girls' Rescue Home, managed by a committee of Christian men. Situated in a narrow back street, in an uninteresting neighbourhood, we had difficulty in locating the place. In answer to our knock, the first sound we heard was the grinding of a big key in the front-door lock. An elderly matron greeted us, a comely dame, dressed in uniform, with a bunch of keys hanging by a chain from her girdle. That bunch of keys furnished an index to the character of the Institution. On entering the door was locked, and we felt as if within a prison. The windows were high, and so built that exit thereby would be impossible. The bedrooms were unadorned with either picture or looking-glass. No coverings were on the floors; no lawn, no flower garden, no cosy common-room. A galvanized iron fence, twelve feet high, surrounded the property. Within were gathered a number of women and girls, who seemed to divide their time between the wash-tub, the dining-room, and the bed. For nine weary months they were supposed to be kept within this so-called Home. The food was good, though plain. Beyond doubt the staff were humane and Christian, but the atmosphere of the whole place was depressing.

A remarkable illustration of how not to do a thing; a pity indeed that so much of energy should thus be directed along lines foredoomed at least to partial failure.

Early in the history of the C.M.M. it was borne in upon the minds of superintendent and Committee alike that we should have to face, in a definite shape, some scheme of rescue for the girl of the kerbstone, and provide a real Home, in many respects different from that described above. Sydney, with a population as large as that of Manchester, the fifth city of the Empire, the metropolis of a wealthy state, one of the largest shipping ports in the world, must necessarily be brought face to face with ramifications of the vice known as the social evil. The extraordinary beauties of the surroundings of the city, together with the balmy character of its climate, and the ease with which money is earned, add accentuation to the evil. Young people here live in the open the whole year round, whilst slum children play on the kerbstone till late at night. The temptations to moral laxity are ever present. A sad reflection, surely, upon our vaunted Christian civilization that every night over three thousand fallen young women are found plying their demoralizing trade, 'selling their souls to whoever will buy,' in this fair city, every one of them somebody's child, and many of them stolen from the fairest of fair homes! In the early days of our work this fact haunted me. Living right in the centre of the night movement of the city, often in its streets till midnight, I became familiarized with scenes sad enough to break the heart of a Stoic.

A few of us resolved to try an experiment in rescue work. We went to the Committee and pleaded to be allowed to take some step in the direction of lessening the sweep of this dreadful tide of evil. We stipulated for three things:

1. A Home situated in a healthy neighbourhood, far removed from the city's centres of vice.
2. That we should be allowed to try an experiment on what is known as 'the open-door' principle of management.
3. That we should be given a free hand in the admission and treatment of inmates, without reference to committees of any kind.

All this was ultimately granted by the Committee.

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Accompanied by the late Hon. E. Vickery, a number of properties were inspected. By an apparent accident we were directed to the salubrious heights of Burwood, one of our most beautiful suburbs. There, right upon its highest slopes, surrounded by trees and gardens and grass fields, we discovered a suitable villa residence, recently occupied by one of the city's merchant princes, but to-day in the hands of the bank for sale. On remarkably easy terms we secured the house, with garden land sufficient for all our requirements. Another £1,000 was spent on additional rooms, laundries, &c., and to-day the C.M.M. is in possession of an up-to-date Home, capable of accommodating forty young women; a delightful spot, beautiful for situation, and a real home. In the month of December, 1902, Lady Rawson, wife of His Excellency the Governor, amidst much of rejoicing, to the sound of band and the voice of able speakers, formally opened 'The Alexandra Home,' so named after our beloved Queen-Mother, whose private secretary later on wrote us a letter that we shall prize to our dying day, the following extract from which will be read with interest:

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK.

Her Majesty feels that the work in which Mr. Taylor and his co-labourers are engaged is one of the highest value and benevolence, and which earns the gratitude of hundreds of those whose lives would otherwise be hopeless misery, and Her Majesty's best wishes are with this undertaking.

Every stick of furniture for the new venture was collected and paid for by the Ladies' Committee. Said one of our leading ministers after the inspection at the opening, 'Why, you have furnished this place better than are many of our parsonages.' 'So much the worse for the parsonages, and so much the better for this Home,' was our reply. Beyond doubt the Home was comfortably set up: every floor covered with bright linoleums, curtains on windows, beds spotlessly clean with their snow-white counterpanes, drawers and cupboards and looking-glasses in every room, a well-filled set of book-shelves, a homely-looking sideboard, pictures on walls, and an attractive organ in the common-room, with office and quarters for

the staff, all meant, of set purpose, to act as an inspiration to the inmates.

Remember, many of the Sydney kerbstone girls have come, alas, from the best of homes. The first to enter the Alexandra Home was the daughter of a clergyman, the second a squatter's daughter. You are never going to win such like by facing them with bolted doors and prison-like rooms. In rescue work of this character the first thing to be aimed at is to make it possible for the girl to get back her lost self-respect. It is the loss of this that largely creates the modern pariah of 'the red light.' Until that is re-established most efforts at reform are doomed to failure.

Hence we determined, at all costs, that our girls should be introduced not into an Institution, but a real Home—neat, clean, attractive, that would at once preach to them of other and better days; no bolts or bars, no compulsory residence, other than is made possible by the compulsion of love. From the start we stipulated that matron, staff, and girls should take their meals at the one table. There was to be little preaching, but plenty of music and lots of fun when the day's work was over. The discipline, though firm, was yet to be the discipline of love, and the atmosphere of the entire place that of the ordinary family circle.

At first many of our candid critics prophesied that rescue-work methods so unconventional were foredoomed to fail. 'You will never hold the girls,' 'You are bound to spoil them with such mistaken kindness,' 'You'll have to come to the bunch of keys and the barred windows after all.' And so they went on talking, whilst the matron and staff set to work to demonstrate the saneness of our methods. Possibly we might have failed had not God sent us as our first matron a lady of education, of consecrated piety, and with a limitless fund of common sense. Under the régime of Sister May an *esprit de corps* was soon established that has been maintained to this day. Wisely the Committee left the C.M.M. superintendent and the matron free to manage the Home on their own lines without reference to Boards or Special Committees. To that fact largely is to be attributed the remarkable success of this 'experiment in girl rescue work.'

'But do the cases all turn out well?' I will answer that question by asking another, 'Are we yet in heaven?' It is pitiable to meet with so many reasonable Christian people who, when it comes to a question of rescue work, take leave of their common sense. Over and over again I have had such words as the following flung at my head by really good people, from whom saner judgements might have been expected: 'Here's another of your failures,' 'Your work is shallow, and is bound to fail.' Judged by the standard thus set up by our critics, I wonder what would become of our churches, our family life, our commercial character? Of course, we have had failures, rank failures, dismal failures. At times our hearts have been almost broken; and yet, thank God, out of our very failures have grown some of our greatest and most permanent successes.

I have in my possession a much-prized photographic group of nine bonnie lassies—inmates, at one time, of our Home. As I look into their faces, I thank God and take courage. Here is answer enough to any unbelieving criticism. This is by no means a picked group, but simply a gathering of girls whom one of our friends was casually able to get together to face the camera. My first thought was to tell the story of each girl's past and present. Obviously that would be unwise. Suffice it to say that the early record in each case is a deplorably sad one. Most of them had reached the bottom of the deepest depths. With one painful exception, the whole nine, through the influence of this Home, have regained their full womanhood. One wears to-day the uniform of a Salvation Army lassie, another fills an honourable position in a Roman Catholic institution, two are married to men in comfortable circumstances, one is again living a happy and trusted life in her mother's home, the other three are giving satisfaction as domestic servants, and, better still, the whole nine professed conversion ere they left the Home.

I am free to admit that such a record is probably unique. Eight successes to one failure is more than the most optimistic could hope for. Still, such is the simple fact so far as this group is concerned. Naturally the religious element is right to the forefront of all the work of the Home. Whilst never a word is said as to creed or church,

every effort is put forth to bring the girls to Christ. In this the success of the staff has been remarkable. I personally have had the joy of witnessing, at the domestic service of the Home, some of the most touching and beautiful scenes I have seen in all my career as an evangelist. The very character of the work renders difficult the giving publicity to details that, were they generally known, would fill every reader's heart with gratitude to God. Hundreds of girls have passed through the Home; they are to be found to-day in all parts of the State, very many of them saved to decent living, and many others brought to God.

I feel impelled to tell the story of probably one of the most notorious cases ever dealt with in Sydney rescue work. Poor M——— came to us in a dreadful condition—diseased, depraved, unclean. The Christian influence of the Home, however, soon told upon her. It was the case of a wild animal that needed to be tamed. After being with us for some time this poor lassie professed anxiety about her soul's salvation. Then her real trouble began; an awakened conscience revealed to her the black list of her past sins. Many anxious hours Sister May spent with her trying to find out what it was that was weighing upon her mind. In the middle of the night she would shriek out that she was being pursued by angry men. With infinite difficulty the Sister gained her confidence. As the poor girl got nearer to the Cross, little by little she felt led to tell out the story of her shame and of the crimes she had been implicated in. So shocked was Sister May that she could not rest until she gained permission to tell the story to me, as the superintendent. Never can I forget the interviews that followed. Ultimately I obtained permission to tell the facts to the police authorities. With bitter tears streaming down her face the girl sobbed out, 'Oh, sir, do what you think right; I am so miserable, I am so miserable!' I interviewed the Inspector-General of Police, and two leading detectives were told off to interview the girl. I was present at the interview. The officers were amazed at the disclosures made, and were put in possession of facts likely to help them solve several puzzling and mysterious cases of crime.

This girl, naturally wayward and foolish, had been lured away from service in a suburban Methodist parsonage by a companion. In Sydney she foolishly answered an advertisement for 'general,' and accepted service at a public-house—the head quarters, as it transpired, of a notorious gang of burglars. Here she was literally forced into a career of shame, became the unwilling paramour of one of the gang, and was compelled, at first at the point of the revolver, to assist in several well-known burglaries. She was made the decoy to mislead the police. Over and over again the booty secured by robbery was put into her charge, the gang separating, to meet again either in Brisbane or Melbourne, and there divide the spoil. She confessed that she had been compelled to be present at two murders, one of which at the time created a widespread sensation throughout Australia. The fullest confessions were made by the heart-broken girl. With a mind somewhat relieved of its burden and in the safety and rest of the Alexandra Home, she was gradually led back to the paths of rectitude. All this took place some years ago. The last I heard of this poor lassie was that she had been received back into the home of her father in the country, and a rumour reaches me that she has been joined in marriage to a decent, respectable young man.

Another case that attracted a good deal of attention at the time was that of a notorious girl known as 'Queenie.' Her story has been published in leaflet form, and is here reproduced; in order that it may be seen how marvellous is the grace of God that can reach down so low, and elevate to so great a height. Thousands of copies of this leaflet have been circulated far and wide, and much good has been done thereby.

THE STORY OF QUEENIE.

'What is the charge?'

'Drunk and disorderly, your Worship.'

The case is gone into, and the decision given:

'Three months, with hard labour.'

A boisterous, unmaidenly laugh comes from the dock. 'Is that all? Why, bless you, I can do that on my head, and come out on my heels.'

The prisoner was a notorious girl, well known to the police, a terror, indeed, to those on the street she frequents.

'If you can do anything with Queenie,' one day said a policeman to one of the C.M.M. Sisters, 'you will earn the gratitude of all the men in this division. And yet I advise you to have nothing to do with her; she is dangerous.'

And dangerous she was, beyond doubt. More than once she spat in the face of the good Sister, and upon another occasion, when in drink, treated her in a manner too shocking to record in ink.

She was one of the wildest girls on the street, and, as her name implies, was what she herself claimed to be, in language more significant than ornate, 'the cock boss of the walk'; a dreadful girl, the despair of the C.M.M. Sisters, and the disgrace of the district.

And yet Queenie had a tender place in her hard heart. She was from a good family, her old father living practically alone, a broken-hearted man, in a large house in one of the suburbs; his heart yearning for the lost child, who, now and again, when she thought of him and the lovely room that had been her own, had times of despondency and of remorse sad to witness.

One night, about eleven o'clock, the good Sister espied Queenie leaning against the wall of the Equitable buildings in George Street, with her head on her arm. Expecting a rude rebuff, but putting up a prayer for help, she ventured to the poor girl's side, and, placing her hand timidly upon her arm, coaxingly ventured to say, 'Queenie, I know you don't like me, but you are in trouble; do let me help you.'

In a moment the wicked proud girl pulled herself together, and, with a loud, empty laugh, replied, 'Look you here, Sister, are you game to walk down George Street arm-in-arm with me?'

'Certainly,' said the plucky little Sister, 'if you wish it I will; but why do you ask it?'

Taken somewhat aback, Queenie answered, 'Come along, then; and look you here, when we get to the end of the street I promise you that I'll go home.'

Down the street they marched arm-in-arm, to the amazement of the street crowds and the amusement of the police,

whose looks seemed to say, 'What new prank is that girl up to now?'

On and on along the street they marched until the George Street North police-station was reached, when, in a moment, Queenie slipped up the steps and stood before the officer in charge, with the Sister still upon her arm.

'Halloa, what's this? Have you brought Queenie to give her in charge?'

The answer came from Queenie herself.

'No, sergeant; Sister — is going to take me home, and I've come to say good-bye to you. Mark my word, you'll never see me again. And now, Sister, call a cab. I have no money, but the old dad will pay for it.'

At midnight the bell was rung in that beautiful but loveless suburban home, and within a few moments the silver-haired old man himself opened the door. Looking from one to the other as if dazed, he faltered out the words, 'What is it?'

'Father, I've come home.'

'But—but what does it mean?' and, turning to the C.M.M. Sister, he cried out, the tears streaming down his furrowed face. 'Oh, does she really mean it?' In a moment the fallen, sinning girl was sobbing on the old man's bosom.

With her own hands the Sister gave the poor filthy girl a hot bath, and then she was taken into her old familiar room, where, after all this while, everything was still exactly as she left it on that sad, sad night when, alas, she had been tempted to her ruin. In a few moments she was warmly clad, and looked another girl. What transpired during that midnight hour between father and daughter may never, no, never, be recorded by pen and ink!

Queenie had come to stay; but, oh, at times the temptation to go off again was awful. The good Sister was unremitting in her sympathy, visiting her daily, and gradually seeking to lead the poor erring one back to the 'Friend of sinners.'

On entering her room one morning not long afterwards, she found the poor girl in tears. Naturally the street name, 'Queenie,' had been discarded, and her own name, Ethel, again taken.

'What is it, Ethel dear?' asked the Sister.

Throwing her arms round the Sister's neck, she sobbed out, 'I want, oh, so much, to give my heart to Jesus.'

Side by side they knelt in pleading prayer, a sight pathetic enough to cause the angels to weep. The penitent's cry for pardon entered the great Father's ear, and ere long the prodigal entered the land of rest. The weary struggle was at an end, and a new, clean life was entered upon.

Months passed, and the C.M.M. Sister got on to other work, and the scene just depicted simply lived as a very pleasant and inspiring memory.

One day, some six months afterwards, the Sister was walking down George Street, when she happened to see Queenie's father coming out of David Jones & Co.'s shop. He beckoned her to come to him, and, after cordial greetings, asked, 'Do you think you would know my daughter again if you saw her?'

Filled with anxious fear lest something had happened, she hurriedly replied, 'Of course I should. Why do you ask?'

'But are you sure you would?'

'Sir, why do you ask me?'

Turning round, the old gentleman beckoned an elegantly dressed young lady to him, and, addressing the Sister, said, 'Have you met this lady before?'

'Never,' replied the Sister; and then a peculiar look came into the girl's face, and in a moment, forgetting everything, the Sister cried out, 'Why, it's Queenie!' Such wonders can be wrought by the grace of God within six short months.

Shortly afterwards father and daughter went to London to attend the Coronation celebrations. Ethel has retained her trust in Christ, and has continued to live a humble, faithful Christian life, and has greatly cheered the C.M.M. Sister by her frequent letters.

The last epistle received lies before me. It is, oh, so difficult to realize that just one short year before the writer was a loud-voiced, wicked street-girl, on the streets of Sydney. Let one short quotation tell its own sweet tale:

'I have some special news to send you, and hasten to tell you about it. As you know, dear Sister ———,

the Lord Jesus has done so very much for me, oh, has He not? I feel I can never do enough for Him. He is still very precious to me. We have decided to live in England, and as father will be staying with my married sister I can be spared; and so, dear Sister, I have offered myself to God for work as a missionary, and I am just told that I am accepted. This is my news. You know, Sister, I must do something for Jesus; He has done so much for me. Dear dad is very happy about it, and so am I. If you see any of the Sydney girls, tell them Queenie is still loving Jesus; and tell them, too, that, oh, I do wish they also would give Him their hearts.'

Think of it! From the streets of Sydney to a missionary college in one short year! Such wonders God's grace alone can do.

XIX

AN AUSTRALIAN PERIL: THE PROBLEM OF THE LARRIKIN

What is a larrikin? An Australian product—A public menace—The despair of the police force—A remarkable letter—Are they worth saving?—A bold venture, and what came of it—One thousand larrikins at the C.M.M.—Pandemonium let loose—The Larrikins' Club started—Earl Carrington's sympathy—Three-storied warehouse taken—Lady Allen's co-operation—Muscular Christianity—How they could sing!—An amusing service—What came of it all?—One an evangelist—Conversion of gambling larrikins—A big fish in the net.

THE larrikin is one of the natural products of the Australian soil. He belongs to the same genus as the London street arab or the Californian hoodlum, and yet the species differs from either—a sort of cross between the two. On the one hand, he is scarcely a 'ruffian,' and, on the other, is more than 'a homeless outcast.' An American has defined him as one who is 'boisterously rude, rowdy, and a rough, disorderly fellow.' The Australian atmosphere—natural, physical, political, social—has produced its own types, in feature, in pronunciation, in habit, and in character. The lowest type is that of the larrikin. Like the kerbstone girl, he seems to thrive abnormally under our Australian skies. There is something so seductive, so soporific in our genial climate. All the year round we can live in the open, can revel in our superabundance of sunshine, so that men are tempted to be lazy; and such as yield to the siren voice are bound to suffer. The larrikin represents the non-resister. Strange that in so fair and prosperous a land, where education is free and compulsory, and where every man has a vote, such a species could be possible. But here he is, a weak limb on the body politic, one of Australia's perils.

Twenty years ago the larrikin was more than a peril;

he was a menace to communities in which he flourished. During later years there has been so remarkable an improvement, so far at least as organized larrikinism is concerned, that many find it difficult to remember the condition of things in the early nineties. In spite of legal enactments and of police supervision, the larrikin became a pestilential influence in many of our large centres of population. Policemen have told me that in Sydney several murders had been traced to the larrikin element; but so complete and binding and secret were the bonds that bound them together that convictions had been impossible. Almost every district would have its 'push,' numbering from twenty up to eighty larrikins. I knew of eight or ten such in Sydney alone, and there were many others. I gained the confidence of many, and learned something of their secrets. One of their number was elected 'boss of the "push" '; they swore oaths of allegiance to him and to one another, oaths of an awful character, carrying with them the severest penalties for disobedience.

At the time the Lyceum Theatre first came into our hands we opened an after-church service for the men of the street. These unconventional services, together with the meetings of the 'Two-up School Mission,' secured for us the ear of many of the larrikins of the city. They came in crowds, often to upset, but sometimes to listen. A remarkable work broke out amongst them, and some professed conversion. One night, on stepping on to the stage, a pencilled letter was put into my hand. It was the strangest epistle I have ever received. In substance it ran as follows:

DERE MISTER TAILER,

Will you please pray that our 'boss' may git converted? Lots of us blokes wants to git converted, but we dearn't until our boss does.

You Christians do not undesstand. Just what Jesus Crist is to you, our boss is to us. We dearn't do anything until he tells us.

Pleese, sur, pray for our boss.

Yours truely,

Incidentally I may mention that their 'boss,' by the grace of God, did get converted. As may be supposed, it was a difficult case to deal with. But God is rich in mercy, aye, and in patience. Ultimately poor Smith stepped into the light of God's forgiving favour. Strangely enough, a number of the 'push' followed their leader, and we had a busy time with them in the inquiry-room.

Early in the nineties we felt that the C.M.M. ought, with firm grip, to tackle this problem. About that time a leading New York journalist in these words emphasized our position, and shall I say our call? 'English observers,' said he, 'report the Antipodean larrikin as the most offensive variety of the race now extant.' Probably this was true. At any rate we felt it to be a reflection upon the Christianity of this great city that practically nothing was being done to reach this strange, almost outlawed class. At night they often made night hideous. They invaded our harbour pleasure resorts. They perpetrated unspeakable horrors upon innocent citizens, culminating in what were known as the Mount Rennie and the Moore Park outrages, that led to long sentences of imprisonment.

At length a few of us resolved upon action. The young men of suburban Methodism were invited to a meeting in my office. A number responded, who listened eagerly to our suggestions. We proposed the establishment—at first on a small scale—of a 'Boys' Club'—we dare not use the word 'larrikin.' The outcome of that meeting was of so extraordinary a character, and created so much discussion, with more than a little excitement, that I am tempted to give the facts in detail. In my lifelong experience as an evangelist I have had to solve some awkward problems, have found myself in some tight places, but they were as child's play to what now awaited us. It was proposed to inaugurate our new departure with a social evening, preceded by a substantial tea. A Ladies' Committee arranged to provide for the entertainment of three hundred. The perplexing question was, How were we to secure our guests? The larrikin is a shy bird. You cannot catch him by putting salt on his tail. If he has the slightest idea that he is being patronized, he is simply not there. We resolved upon a bold stroke,

and issued one thousand beautifully printed pink invitations, just as if we were dealing with Society people. We put the distribution into the hands of the Sisters of the People. The most sanguine of us hoped that we should secure the presence of a couple of hundred.

The night arrived. Shall I ever forget it? It was in the month of November, a drizzling rain was falling, and the thermometer was up in the nineties. The Committee met in my office, and we were arranging a programme, when a great noise came up to us from the street. I went to the window, and, oh, horror! there were over one thousand of the worst larrikins of Sydney clamouring for admittance. The memory of that moment still acts upon me like a nightmare. We were at our wits' end how to act. For a time we looked at one another in dumb silence, and then burst out laughing. Mr. W. Davis—formerly M.P. for Goulburn—a little, vigorous man, at length broke the silence. 'Look here, in my young days I served in the British Army; I've never yet been afraid of any man. You plant yourselves on the various stairway landings' (the room in which we were to meet was a hundred-and-two steps up from the street), 'and I will take charge of the entrance gate. When the room is full let me know, and I'll shut the gate.' Poor man, his arms ached for days afterwards. In the fellows rushed, damp and steaming; and up they ran until some fell on their faces at the top out of breath. Some four or five hundred thus gained admission, and the gate was closed against the rest, who went howling down the street. Then commenced a scene such as I have never witnessed. The fellows—not children, mark you, but youths from fifteen to twenty-five years of age—had evidently come to have some fun. Every one was excited. The noise they made was terrific. I had borrowed a large bell from an ironmonger, and, jumping on to a table, rang it with all my might. One of the Committee—Mr. W. H. McClelland—who was standing about five yards from me, afterwards told me that he could scarcely hear that bell. Putting both hands to my mouth, I literally yelled out, 'We—are—going—to—ask—a—blessing.' In a moment there came the response from every part of the room, 'A blessing! What's that, governor? All right, ask it, then.' We

started to sing 'Be present at our table, Lord,' and at once the cry went up, 'Why, it's a concert,' and they began to sing. Some sang 'Pop goes the weasel,' others 'We won't go home till morning.' Oh, it was awful! All the time the rascals kept their eyes fixed upon me, evidently thinking I was Master of Ceremonies. As soon as we got to the end of the grace, they suddenly stopped, as much as to say, 'Now what's the next act in this here farce?' Seizing my chance in the momentary hush, I shouted out, 'Help yourselves!' In less than five minutes there was nothing left upon those tables but banana skins. Then began a scene of indescribable confusion. Some sang, others yelled, and some even took out of their pockets packs of dirty playing-cards, and, squatting on the floor in corners, began to gamble before our very eyes.

As may be imagined, we were at a loss what to do. These fellows had taken possession of the room, and were out for a night's fun. Taking advantage of a temporary lull, I shouted out, 'Now, try to be quiet; the President of the Conference is going to speak.' That upset them completely. Some of the rowdiest called out 'What's that, governor? The Pre-pre-president of the Co-co-conference, did you call him? All right, stick him up!' And in all conscience the President was stuck up, in more senses than one. It was our venerated old friend, the saintly Richard Caldwell, recently deceased. Dear man, he might as well have been in bed. Nobody three yards away heard a word he said. After a while, however, things quieted down a little, and I managed to explain why we had asked them to come. As I gradually unfolded our plans, they became interested, and on a show of hands being called for, over 300 of them signified their willingness to join the 'Boys' Club.' It took us until late that night to enroll the members, nearly 350 names and addresses being entered.

Unknown to me, reporters from the two morning papers were present. Naturally this was good copy for them. Next morning both the *Herald* and the *Telegraph* gave over a column under black-letter headings, 'A Plucky Attempt at Evangelism,' 'The C.M.M. among the Larrikins,' 'An Extraordinary Meeting,' &c. A little after nine that morning the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

hurriedly knocked at my office door. 'I've read the account in the papers,' said he. 'It's fine! I'm in a hurry, but here's a five-pound note; if you want more it's there for you. Go ahead; it's fine!' and he was gone. During the day Sir William McMillan, one of the Ministers of the Crown, sent a note saying that His Excellency the Governor, Earl Carrington, wished to see me. I went to Government House with a good deal of trepidation, but was soon at my ease. His Excellency laughed heartily as he told me how intensely interested he had been in reading the reports in the newspapers. He paid the Committee some very fine compliments, and then gave me a lot of advice as to how we should proceed. 'I want you to feel,' added he, 'that I am thoroughly with you in this venture. Go ahead, and I will come down and talk to the lads.'

The C.M.M. Committee was at once called together to discuss the situation. It was felt that there was only one course open to us, to 'go ahead,' as the Governor had expressed it. Of course, the thing assumed proportions too big for the young men's committee to manage, but they loyally stood by the movement. A three-storied warehouse was secured at a rental of £350 per year. This was furnished throughout. The basement was devoted to an up-to-date gymnasium, the ground floor to a room for meetings, entertainments, &c., and the top flat was divided into class-rooms, &c. Ere long the thing was in working order. Numbers of leading citizens proffered their help. Lady Allen (widow of that doughty Methodist knight, Sir George Wigram Allen, M.L.A.) and friends gave us one night a week. The commanders of the warships in port, with some of their officers, also came to our help. The club was open every night of the week, Sundays included. But, oh, it was a tough proposition! Many a time my heart almost failed me, and we were again and again on the point of surrendering the whole thing. We were thrown upon our own resources, with no personal experience to guide us. Again and again we were faced by the spirit of open rebellion, and simply had to fight our way clean through. I soon found out that it was of no use speaking to these fellows in the language of the Sunday-school class-room. One night a big, burly fellow seemed to be

possessed of the devil. I warned him, but he treated my words to a guffaw of laughter. I confess that I was furious, and, stepping up to him, said, 'I say, do you see that staircase?'

'Yes, governor, I see it sure enough.'

'Well, you just do that again, and I'll pitch you neck and crop down those stairs.'

'Do you mean that really, governor?'

With a look that seemed to frighten him, I said, 'You just try it on, that's all.'

The coward—for most larrikins at heart are cowards—gave me a look of respect, and slunk back into his seat, subdued, conquered.

One night I went down to the club-rooms, to find everything in ruins. Some hostile 'push' from one of the distant suburbs, that was 'at war' with many of our men, had forced the lock, tore down the gas-brackets, smashed the gymnasium, and spread confusion everywhere. We were powerless to do anything, and so simply got to work and repaired the rooms, and started off again.

Sunday evening was devoted to a religious service as unconventional as any that Billy Sunday ever conducted, and that is saying a good deal. I smile to this day as I try to imagine some of my dignified clerical brethren at work before that congregation. My, but those fellows could sing! It is a remarkable thing that, although most of them were Roman Catholics, give them a Sankey hymn-book, and they were as happy and as lively as sand-flies. Sing? They would almost raise the roof. Some of them even had really fine voices. One night I ventured upon very thin ice. Putting my hands in my pockets, with one foot on the chair before me, and striving to look as non-committal as possible, I essayed to give them an address. It was a risky experiment. I got on fairly well for a few moments, trying to explain the real purpose that was ours in running that club. Unfortunately, like the stupid man I was, I stumbled upon a big word, and said, 'I appeal to you chaps, have we ever said a word in this place that you could twist to mean that we were proselytizing?' At once I was pulled up with a round turn, 'I say, governor, what's that? Say him again. Pros—pros-pros—I say, what was it?' and the whole crowd went off into roars of laughter. Of course,

I laughed with them—what else was possible—and then I explained matters, showing them that we had never talked to them about our Church, &c. ‘By-the-by, men,’ I ventured to ask, ‘can any of you tell me to what Church I do belong?’ They gave me a good look, and then, as was their custom, deliberately turned away from me, and began to discuss the matter among themselves in stage whispers. As calmly as possible I stood my ground, until at length I ventured to ask if they were ready with their answer. Their ‘boss’ stood up, and, with face as sober as a judge, uttered just one word, ‘*Synagogue*,’ and pointed to my nose; and then the whole pack again burst into laughter. Now what could one do with a congregation like unto that? I simply laughed with the loudest of them, and then gave out a popular chorus.

But what came of it all? Has the Mission made any appreciable impression upon this class? That is a difficult question to answer. This I do know, that our action caused much discussion, and led to developments in unexpected places, and on somewhat similar lines. The Sydney Boys’ Brigade did splendid work among these young fellows. The Roman Catholic authorities, learning that a large number of their young men had joined our club, set to work to establish one of their own. I can offer no explanation, and would not dream of laying claim to the creation of a sentiment that practically put a stop to the doings of organized larrikinism, but certain it is that a pronounced change gradually took place. The ‘push’ system seemed largely to die out, and to-day, although the larrikin is still in evidence, he is by no means the dangerous feature of the State he was at the time the C.M.M. Boys’ Club was organized.

I am furthermore glad to be in a position to state that, as has been illustrated in previous chapters of this story, quite a number of the members of this class have been brought under the spiritual influence of the Mission, and many have given evidence of a remarkable work of grace in their hearts. I am thinking at this moment of one, a member of the Pyrmont Bridge ‘push,’ who was converted at one of our services, became a worker in the Mission, and later on entered our Evangelists’ Training Institute. A few years afterwards I visited England, and found this

young man a prominent worker in the Manchester Mission.

A letter lies before me from one who some years ago, *when on his way to the Melbourne Cup*, listened to addresses given at the town-hall corner and followed to the Centenary Hall, where he was soundly converted, and for many years has been one of Christ's witnesses in the midst of gamblers and racing men—a gambling larrikin saved and kept by the power of God.

Another case that at the time interested me deeply was that of a larrikin of pronounced type—a leader among his fellows—whom I had the joy of leading to the Saviour. The picture is now before my mind's eye of that young fellow kneeling by the side of several mates, the night after his own conversion, telling them what God had done for him, and pointing them to Christ. On rising I pleaded with them to be true to God, saying, 'Who knows but that a Peter McKenzie may grow out of this night?' I append an extract from a letter received from this same young man some time afterwards: 'From the moment of my conversion my soul has been on fire with love for Christ and a desire to preach His gospel. I was received on full plan as a local preacher in England on April 4, 1899. Under a deep conviction of a divine call I gave myself up fully to evangelistic work. For six months I had charge of one of Thomas Cook's Gospel Cars. I then commenced work in one of our circuits as a missionary, and have been at work there for the past three years. It is marvellous what God has been pleased to do in and with me. No one has been more surprised than myself.'

It is quite a common occurrence for me, after the lapse of all these years, to be stopped in the street by middle-aged men, who, with a smile, greet me with 'Hullo, Mr. Taylor! Do you remember the times we had in the Boys' Club?' I confess I would scarcely like again to go through the experiences which I have thus briefly outlined, and yet it was quite worth while.

XX

AMONG THE WEE BAIRNIES

The nation's hope, the nation's music—'Nobody's child'—The slum, Australia's disgrace—Wanted, mothers—Mrs. Bavin and Sister Francis—A house given—The work started—Dalmar Home purchased—Unique fact—From a foundling to a soldier—'Who is this young lady?'—Story of little Nellie—Sleeping on doorsteps—Little Lizzie—'Are beds in heaven as soft as these?'—A long-felt want well met—The Home's 'Honour Roll.'

'THE child in the midst' is an ever-present problem, in every age, in every nation. The child is not alone the nation's hope, but provides the nation's music. More than anything else in this workaday world it keeps sentiment alive amongst us. The real poetry of life is born by the side of the cradle.

But, tempting as is the theme, I have no call to write about that bonnie, well-nurtured little one, so safely cushioned upon its mother's breast. Other scenes are before me, other voices clamour to be heard. I am impelled to write of that poor little pinched specimen of humanity, that 'nobody's child' that, with a look so wan, and a face so old, and a cry that makes one shiver, was brought only yesterday to the Mission's door, with a plaintive plea from the young mother—who ought not to have been a mother—that we should relieve her of the fruitage of her wrong-doing.

Alas, what our Lord said of 'the poor' may even yet be stated of the neglected child; it is always with us. '*The neglected child*'—the nation's condemnation; a satire, surely, upon our vaunted conventional professions. A problem this that statesmen have striven to solve, that authors have laboured to depict, that Christian preachers have discoursed upon, and thus far the Church has only begun to touch with hesitant hand. It was present in our Lord's day; it is with us still, a silent protest against the past failure of the Christian Church to grasp and assimilate

and reproduce to their full extent the very first principles of our great evangel.

I have elsewhere spoken of the seductive, intoxicating character of our Australian climate. Of course, we are proud of it, we revel in it ; but, alas, in the final reckoning it will have a goodly number of sins to account for—that and our past lack of civic sanity. In Australia there should have been no slums. The greed of jerry-builders, the absence in days gone by of anything approaching care in town-planning, the playing into the hands of the powerful classes by our legislators, have combined to give us, in modified form, that which is the scourge and the shame of every European city—the *slum*. Here it is, with its absence of gardens and breathing-places, its insanitary houses, its narrow streets. I have on other pages spoken of the larrikin, and of what the American knows as ‘ the girl of the red light.’ Frankly I believe these would have been negligible problems but for the ‘ kerbstone child.’ And that would have been a problem easy of solution but for two other things—mothers who are not mothers, and houses that are not homes.

Some time ago we gathered together some 250 of the child larrikins of Sydney. Eh, but it was a pathetic sight—children abnormally alert, saucy of tongue, and hardened in feature. These youngsters are educated in the street. At night-time, when the devil is busy, they are there to see and hear ; no wonder that they harden into problems of the toughest. What Napoleon said of France can to-day be repeated of Sydney : our greatest need is mothers ! I mean women who are real mothers ; not creatures who hand over their offspring to the dry nurse while they go off to the bridge-party ; mothers who nurse their own children, who do not turn them out to the companionships of the gutter ; mothers who are neither slatterns nor gossips, but who rise to the divine conception of true motherhood. Beyond doubt it is true, as one has put it : ‘ If every cradle was rocked by a good mother, the world would be full of good men, as sure as you breathe. If every boy and girl to-day had a good mother, the saloons and disreputable houses would go out of business to-morrow.’

But the millennial hour has not yet struck. And so this neglected child problem stares us in the face. The C.M.M.

had not long started its work ere it came in contact with children, flung into its hands, for which it had no open door. The establishment of our sisterhood accentuated our perplexity. Something must be done—but *what?* At the right moment the answer came, God gave us the agent, and made possible the agency. Early in the nineties Australia was staggered by the blow of an awful commercial collapse. The financial world went crazy. Banks closed their doors, businesses fell to pieces, and many a church shook in its shoes. The C.M.M. was hard hit, for upon the Centenary Hall was the incubus of a debt that threatened to end our work in York Street. At the Conference of 1893, much to my discomfiture, I was sent to England and America to help save the premises. I was away for two years, and upon my return was so worn that by doctor's orders I was sent up to Bathurst for a triennium. During those five years splendid work was carried on at the C.M.M. under the superintendency first of the Rev. Rainsford Bavin, and then of the Rev. W. Woolls Rutledge. Two new and important branches were opened, 'The C.M.M. Children's Home' and (under Mr. Rutledge) 'The Medical Retreat for the Treatment of Dipsomaniacs.' The big hearts of Mrs. Bavin and of Sister Francis were stirred within them when they realized how strong the devil was all around us in the demoralizing of the child life of the city. They gave many an anxious hour, by day and by night, to find a way in which the Mission could open its arms to the waifs and strays of our slums. Gradually the way opened. The Hon. E. Vickery again came to our aid in the offer of buildings to be used as a temporary Home; and on Tuesday, October 31, 1893, the first C.M.M. 'Children's Home' was formally opened by the wife of the President of the Conference, the Rev. James Egan Moulton, D.D., of Tongan fame. In this departure there was an entire absence of criticism. Everybody welcomed the stranger. As Mr. Colwell puts it in his *History of Methodism in New South Wales*, 'At once the home captured the practical sympathy of the people, and, in addition to being one of the most blessed, it has also been one of the most successful features of the Mission.' A special Ladies' Committee was appointed to manage this work, and they have managed it so wisely that, as Mr. Colwell adds, 'they have always had a balance

in hand on the working expenses, and their management has been characterized by economy, capability, and the spirit of Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." "

The work grew so rapidly that necessity compelled the Committee to secure larger and more suitable premises. For the sum of some £1,800 a beautiful villa, with four acres of land, was secured at Croydon. In the month of March, 1900, during the session of Conference, 'The Dalmar Children's Home' was officially opened by Lady Rawson, wife of His Excellency the Governor.

A book could be written telling of the fine work done at Dalmar. I know of few public institutions run with greater economy, or more efficiently. The ladies raised all the money needed for the purchase, alteration, and furnishing of the Home. There is not to-day a farthing of debt upon the property or upon the current account.

Mention must be made of a fact so unique in child rescue work as to have led to many eulogistic things being said by outsiders touching the management of this Home. One day, some fourteen years after the Home had been opened, Sir Harry Rawson sent for me to Government House to discuss several of the developments of the Mission's work. It may be remarked in passing that nearly every representative of Royalty, either in Commonwealth or State, has evinced much interest in the work of the Mission. Such men as Earl Carrington, Earl Jersey, Earl Beauchamp, Earl Dudley, Lord Denham, Lord Chelmsford, Sir Harry Rawson, Sir Gerald Strickland, and others have gone out of their way to eulogize the work and to preside at our annual meetings. Whilst in conversation with His Excellency I mentioned that during the fourteen years our Children's Home had been at work we had only lost one child by death. The Governor interrupted me with the remark, 'But you surely do not mean that literally?' And on being assured that such was the case, he became excited, and made this significant statement: 'You amaze me. In my time I have had a great deal to do with Homes of Rescue for neglected children, but never have I heard anything like unto this. Only one death in fourteen years—the thing is without a parallel!' And then, after speaking of the high death-rate usually registered in such-like institutions, he added,

I would advise you, wherever you go, never to hesitate to mention that fact ; it is remarkable.'

The fourteen years have increased to twenty-two, and, with gratitude to God, I gladly repeat that still only one death has been placed to the debit of the Dalmar Home. I can offer no explanation. When we remember the hundreds of waifs and strays here cared for, many of them 'nobody's children,' some picked up out of the gutter, others the offspring of confirmed drunkards rescued from squalor and filth, and not a few brought to us suffering from disease, and yet in twenty-two years only one death, I also question whether its equal can anywhere be found. The institution is in every sense a Home ; the members of the Ladies' Committee take a keen personal interest in every inmate ; that and the skill of the Medical Board and the patience and care of the staff, in part accounts for this noteworthy result.

I must resist the temptation to give more than an outline sketch of the kind of work done behind the gates of this lovely Home.

In the middle of a dark night an old couple living in Pyrmont were awakened by what seemed to be the cry of a child. On investigating, they discovered a bundle lying at their back gate, within which they found a newly-born male child. The police were summoned, who communicated with Sister Francis, and without delay the little one was carried to the Children's Home, where it was tenderly cared for, fed and nursed, was baptized by one of our ministers, and became the darling of the institution. When about three years old the little pet was adopted into the family of a Christian farmer ; grew to be a healthy lad, was educated in the district school, gave his heart to God ; came to Sydney and learnt a trade ; became an honoured citizen, the master of a good business, surrendering which, in order to obey the call of Empire, he did heroic work in the trenches in France.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, at the close of the 'Lyceum People's Own' meeting, I was passing through a group of our people waiting for the usual workers' tea, when I was accosted by a young lady, well dressed and of unusually beautiful features ; who, with a winning smile, said, 'You don't know me, Mr. Taylor.' 'Well, let me see ;

I think—where have we met before?’ Smiling at my embarrassment, she quietly answered, ‘Why, I am——— (mentioning the name of a former inmate of the Children’s Home). No wonder I was nonplussed, the transformation was so complete. She had been early brought to us, and placed in the Dalmar Home. Here she grew up, was educated, trained in domestic duties, and was led to Christ. For some time now she has been earning her own living, is a soldier of the Salvation Army, and is expecting to be shortly sent to the Melbourne Home for the Training of Officers.

Let me tell you the pathetic story of little Nellie, as written by the Matron of the Home. The picture of the child is before me as I write, covered with filth and clad in rags, just as she came to us when only nine years old. The matron writes: ‘A case of great destitution and misery at Leichhardt was reported to me. I accordingly set out for the police-station and asked that a policeman might be allowed to go with me to search it out. We found the house, and ascertained these facts: The man and woman were both drunkards. The child had been bought when a few hours old, from a woman who carried on baby-farming, for a premium of £5. On entering the house—a wretched and destitute place—we found the woman under the influence of drink. I looked for the child’s bed. Finding none, I ascertained where she slept. It was on a bed of straw in the corner, covered with old coats and other ragged garments she had picked up on her daily rounds. The smell was so offensive that I had to ask the woman to come outside and speak to me; and yet this poor child had to inhale this atmosphere day and night. We were told that the child left home at daybreak, without food, for the Sydney markets, three miles away. I determined to await her return, and at half-past five, after nearly six hours’ watch, we saw the child trying to push a sort of wooden cart before her, laden with decayed fruit, vegetables, parts of fish, old boots, &c., and on the top pieces of wood she had picked up for the day’s firing. We could hardly realize she was a child, so tattered and torn and destitute did she look. I took her by the hand and said, “Leave this cart, and come along with me.” Looking up with one of the saddest of faces, she said, “What, is daddy going to beat me for being so long? I could not

help it ; they called me a cadger at the market, and knocked me about." We took her away from this home of sin and drunkenness, and after having two or three good baths, her hair cut, and good warm clothes substituted for her rags, we think she may be made, like some of the other children, into a bright and happy child. The girl is but nine years of age, but old in sin, knows not right from wrong, and cannot understand why it is wrong to tell a lie.'

I have made careful inquiries about the after-history of this poor little creature, and learn that it proved a most difficult case ; but kindness mingled with firmness won the day, and to-day, after all these years, little Nellie is the wife of a respectable man, and never ceases to express her thankfulness to the Dalmar Home for all it had done for her.

My daughter, who is the honorary secretary of this branch, has just supplied me with the following specimen cases in brief, which will, I am sure, claim the attention of my readers :

1. *Little May*.—' Minding babies,' as she herself put it, was this child's occupation when we got hold of her. And yet she was but nine years old. Her mother—a confirmed drunkard—afterwards served a long term in prison for baby-farming. After spending long weary nights in trying to pacify the babies, this child would steal out into the streets, tired and hungry, and would cuddle up on some doorstep, longing to die and 'live among the angels' of whom some kind ladies had told her. May remained in our care for some years, and was then adopted by a married sister who had herself been an inmate of Dalmar.

2. *Lizzie*.—A poor little outcast. A sweet face, but, oh, so thin and white ; possessing a gentle but frightened manner. No need to tell us she 'never had much to eat ; hardly ever had any dinner.' Her bed was the kitchen floor, and for coverlet a piece of old carpet. She does not remember either father or mother, but was handed from one woman to another, each growing weary of her, till Sister Tebbutt found her in a wretched hole, and brought her 'home.' Her little mind is exercised to know 'if the beds in heaven are as soft as hers is now.' And her one dread is lest she should be sent back to her former life. . . . Lizzie was later on adopted into a good family, and is now married and the mother of her own home nest.

3. *Lellie*.—A wee motherless lassie left to the care of a drunken, gambling father. Her condition, as she was handed over to the Committee, may be imagined. She remained with us until she was nine years of age, and was adopted by a Christian lady in the country. Our latest news of her is that she has been trained as a nurse in one of the public hospitals of this State.

4. *Elaine*.—A baby fourteen months old when brought to us—a foundling. The case was recommended to us by a State official, and was 'signed over absolutely to the control of the Committee.' A little while later a visiting lady fell in love with the little pet, and took her to China, where she is living with kindly people in a high official position. The new mother thus writes to us: 'Baby is very well, and stood the journey splendidly. We are very happy to have such a darling daughter. She is a lovely little girl, and I already love her as if she were my own. We are very anxious for her to become legally ours, so will be glad when the probation expires. She is very happy in this cool, beautiful spot where we are spending the summer near the sea. My little boy is devoted to her, and she loves him too. We feel very blessed to have such a joy in our home, and will do our best to bring her up to be a thoroughly good Christian woman, and I thank you for sending me such a treasure.'

5. *A Foundling*.—Sister Tebbutt one day found a baby-girl in a dirty state sitting on the ground. When washed she was found to be covered with sores caused by neglect; and, suffering from 'rickets,' she was unable to stand. After ten days in Prince Alfred Hospital she entered the Home, and ere long became a strong, healthy child, quite the pet of the household.

It would be easy thus to multiply cases, but enough has been said to emphasize the practical character of the philanthropic work attempted by the C.M.M. New South Wales has now little need to be ashamed of what is being done by the churches, by personal charities, and by the Government to give every child born on our soil a fair chance in life. Amongst these various agencies the Dalmar Home is recognized by the State authorities as supplying a long-felt need, and doing its work in a manner that reflects the highest credit upon the Methodist ladies who have the

work in hand. Amongst the facts that are a source of joy to the committee in charge is that several of the old inmates have gone fighting for their country in the trenches in France. An attractive 'Honour Roll' bearing the names of such adorns the wall of the entrance-hall of Dalmar Home.

XXI

EVANGELISTIC PHILANTHROPY: THE ROMANCE OF MISSION WORK

Professional 'slumming'—The real thing—A *vava avis*—Sense of humour—Upsetting incident—Converted once a fortnight—'That soft bloke in York Street'—Our greatest triumphs—Social department—Free meals and beds—Our Immigrants' Homes—Queen Victoria's Seamen's Rest—Remarkable records—Notable conversions—A Norwegian Sankey—Youthful missionary—From forecastle to missionary—Saved through a cabman's mistake—A modern 'City of Refuge'—Among the bluejackets—Blessed results—Home for dipsomaniacs—Good work done.

DR. ELLIS, in his remarkable book, *Billy Sunday: Life, Evangelism, Message*, directs attention to the conversion of this unique evangelist at an open-air service in the slums of Chicago. He has an illuminating passage on the true character of city rescue work. 'A single visit to a downtown rescue mission,' says he, 'is romantic, picturesque, and somewhat of an adventure—a sort of sanctified slumming trip. Far different is it to spend night after night, regardless of weather or personal feelings, in coming to close grips with sin-sodden men and women, many of them the devil's refuse. A sickening share of the number are merely seeking shelter or lodging or food; sin's wages are not sufficient to live upon, and they turn to the mercy of Christianity for succour. Never to be cast down by unworthiness or ingratitude; to keep a heart of hope in face of successive failures; and to rejoice with a shepherd's joy over the one rescued,—this is the spirit of the consecrated rescue-mission worker.' One could have imagined that Dr. Ellis had graduated at the Sydney C.M.M., so exact a picture has he given of what this work has represented, especially during its formative years.

The wonder has often been expressed that ever since the inauguration of 'The Forward Movement' it has been so

difficult—alike in the Mother Country as in Australia—to find the right kind of men to run these Central Missions. It is not one bit surprising. The Church has been slow in the training of men on the lines of personal, aggressive, philanthropic evangelism. Men like Peter Thompson and Edward Smith, Hugh Price Hughes and S. F. Collier, Charles Garrett and A. R. Edgar, are not born every day. As the Church awakes to its responsibility, and honestly faces this pressing problem of the hour, the supply will meet the demand.

As things go at present, the Central Missioner is a sort of *rara avis*. He needs to possess a good deal of the patience of a Job, the sanctified audacity of Paul, and the warm-hearted impulsiveness of a Peter. In my college days the doctors once refused to pass an otherwise eligible student to fill an appointment in India on the ground that he never perspired. If I may venture to say it, no man, be he ever so capable and shrewd, saintly or orthodox, who comes knocking at the Central Mission door, with his pockets packed with credentials, should ever be placed in charge of such work who does not possess within himself these two very essential things—the perspiring faculty, and a very keen sense of humour. The man especially who cannot see the humorous side of things, and shape his course accordingly, would soon prove to be a square peg in a round hole. I one day said to Sister May, the first matron of our Alexandra Rescue Home, ‘However do you manage to keep going in the midst of so many discouragements?’ ‘By laughing my way through,’ was her answer. ‘A thousand times and more,’ she added, ‘when hard hit by some outrage upon my trustfulness, or by a flagrant case of backsliding, some humorous phase of the thing has set me laughing, and that laugh has simply saved the situation and set me on my feet again.’

I learnt this lesson quite early in the history of the Mission. Let me detail my first experience of what I mean, met with at the very threshold of our work. Mr. Boyer and I were in the habit of taking our stand at the town-hall corner with our handful of workers, our cabinet organ in the midst, ready to start our open-air meeting. One night I said to my colleague, ‘Boyer, play something, and draw the people to the stand.’ ‘What shall I play?’

'Oh, anything—"The Hallelujah Chorus," "The Heavens are Telling," or anything that will fetch them.'

Down Mr. Boyer sat, and away he went into the intricacies of one of the great masters. Now I must tell you that that organ was raised upon a carriage built to my plans—'The Gospel Chariot' we called it—with a platform at the end for the speaker, and a moving floor on which the organist could place his stool. This floor was simply a sliding board, from which, when drawn out, two legs dropped, thus providing the necessary support. Well, as Brother Boyer played away, he forgot his surroundings, and swayed his body as is the manner with organists, utterly oblivious of the fact that this motion was having a disastrous effect upon those legs. Gradually they worked inwards, altering the centre of gravity, until, without warning of any kind, down went that seat, and head over heels flew the organist, his head fortunately alighting upon the foot of one of our women workers. That good soul could not come to church for a fortnight. For days afterwards, when in the midst of our meetings, even when dealing with perplexing cases of soul-trouble, the picture of Mr. Boyer's heels high up in the air would persist in coming into one's mind, necessitating the use of handkerchief to prevent an indecorous outburst of laughter.

In those early days we were sorely perplexed to know in what way to deal with the crowds of professional loafers who had found out that 'there was a soft thing on in old York Street.' Those men became the worry of our lives. Some of them got 'converted' on an average once a fortnight. Thank God, many of these wasters proved to be genuine cases, as these records have already amply shown; but crowds of them were adventurers pure and simple. Some were actors of consummate ability. At first I was in raptures. I remember one night returning home overjoyed, and telling my wife, 'Darling, it is just wonderful what large numbers of the lowest-downers of the city are being converted.' The awakening came along, slowly at first, but it came! One night a wretched fellow was at the communion-rail; he appeared to be in dead earnest, and was in tears. 'Yes, sir,' he said in answer to my questions, 'I'm a bad man, I am, an awful bad man; sir, I want Jesus to make me better. I'm very hungry, sir, but never mind

that ; Lord have mercy on my soul.' And then, for a moment off his guard, he almost whispered, ' I say, sir, you won't forget the shilling, will you ? ' I looked the fellow in the face, and could have hit him. ' Why, you scoundrel, you were here a week ago, and the week before that ! ' With the artlessness of a child he protested that this was the first time he had ever been in the place, but on my mentioning the word ' policeman ' he jumped to his feet and literally rushed out of the church.

One of the genuines from this class one day made me laugh by retailing a conversation he had overheard between two of these fellows. They were, as usual, lying under the trees in the Domain, wrapped round and round in ' Domain blankets,' *alias* old newspapers.

' I say, Jim,' said one, ' wouldn't you like a good bed and a bob, instead of being stuck out here ? '

' My word, old chap, you bet ! But say, what's on ? '

' Well, you just listen to this. There's a soft bloke down in York Street what has open-air meetings in George Street. You just go along and stand in the crowd. When he asks the people to go to the old church, you just figure it out to go with them. Somebody'll preach a sermon. But never mind that. You just watch until the parson invites fellows to come out and get converted. Now's your chance. You just go straight in. Tell him you're a sinner. And be sure you pump up the waterworks ; if you can only cry a bit you're all right. Well, when the play is over, you just tell that parson that you are dead-beat for a bed, and you'll be sure of a bob and a shake-down.'

That is literally what used to happen, and would happen still were it not that our eyes were opened so that instinctively we became able to detect a ' professional ' at first sight.

But as I have seen it in the Water Street Mission, New York, so it has been with us ; our greatest triumphs have been achieved from amongst this, shall I say, the most hopeless class of men and women. We soon found that the problem of the man with the empty stomach had to be faced. At first we were content to give meal-tickets to other charities, or to provide occasional coffee-suppers for such as were down and out. When the notorious Castle-reagh Street Two-up Gambling School came into our hands,

and our work among the criminal classes began, necessity compelled us to enlarge our programme, and ultimately our extensive Social Department was established. I am to-day free to confess that had I my time to live over again I should seek for avenues of service other than this, so long in vogue not only with us, but with other Sydney philanthropic agencies. Of course, we supplied a felt need, and have done much good by the ramifications of our social work; still, I am convinced to-day that bigger and better results would accrue to us for service rendered along some other lines. As an American writer puts it, 'After the whole field of philanthropy and reform has been traversed, it still remains true that the fundamental reform of all is the cleaning up of the lives and the lifting up of the ideals of the people.'

It must not, however, be forgotten that in every part of the extensive work carried on under the head of 'Social Help' the one ulterior purpose has been to reach the souls of those we helped. Otherwise there was little reason for entering into competition with the common lodging-house and the sixpenny restaurant. Philanthropy severed from Evangelism should never form a part of the Church's propaganda. The reason why so many of our Government charitable institutions only reach a low level of success is because religion occupies so secondary a place therein.

I can here but mention the ground covered by the Social Department operations of the Mission.

First as to food. For men and women able to pay we provided a good meal for 9d. ; a better one for 1s. For the man out of work the following was our bill of fare : A large cup of good tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; a slice of bread-and-butter — called by the men 'a door-step' because of its dimensions — $\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; a basin of soup and bread, 1d. ; a good square meal, 4d. Of course, arrangements were made for free meals for such as were really in need. The same remarks apply to beds. Generally speaking, a clean shake-down with bath, &c., was provided for 3d. ; others, a little better, for 6d. ; then others again for 9d., 1s., and 1s 6d. The Mission provided as many as 400 beds per night. In addition to this a 'Young Men's Settlement' was established, also a Home for servant-maids out of work. To supply a strongly-felt need, the Mission more recently established

three Immigrants' Homes—one for families, another for young women, and a third for men. To provide these 200 beds a night made heavy demands upon our resources, and through the cessation of immigration involved the Mission in considerable loss. As accessories to this part of its work, the Mission opened an Employment Agency for men and another for servant-maids, a Missing Friends' Agency, a Men's Shelter, a Workmen's Home, a People's Bank, a People's Lawyer, and a General Information Bureau.

This is not the place in which to discuss the ever-green question as to the Church's duty towards the problem of poverty. It is a standing disgrace that in so goodly a land as this there should be poverty at all. And there would not be but for the cursed whisky business, the tote shop, and the brothel. These are the Church's greatest foes, but for which our widespread Social Department would probably never have been called into being.

Special mention must here be made of the Mission's work amongst the seamen both of the merchant service and of the Navy. This was, indeed, the first branch opened by the C.M.M., as far back as 1886. Under the splendid management first of Mr. H. D. Gilbert, and later of Mr. A. E. Townsend, a remarkable work along the lines of philanthropy and of evangelism has been carried on. Our plant to-day is one of the best in the Southern World, consisting of a fine block of property in Kent Street, known far and wide amongst our seamen as 'The Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest.' The upper rooms are devoted to dormitories, whilst below is the lecture- and reading-room, coffee-bar, seamen's bank, locker-room, &c. Fifty beds are made up nightly, any overflow being provided for by the Mission's Social Department.

The following figures will furnish an idea of the ground covered by this branch. The missionary and his staff report for a recent year as follows :

Visits of Sailors to the Institute	..	..	23,180
Beds let to Seamen	..	..	11,591
Visits paid to Ships in Port	..	..	1,251
Visits paid to Seamen in Prison	..	..	57
Letters received for Seamen	..	..	3,376
Sunday Services and Free Concerts	..	..	112
Seamen's money taken care of	..	£1,519	1s. 6d.

Through the influence of an old friend, the late Rev. R. W. Allen, M.V.O., of London, we were able to secure as patroness H.R.H. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, thus linking our work up with that carried on by another trusted friend, the Rev. David Roe, of East London.

As before mentioned, whilst looking after the creature comfort of Jack when on shore, the one real purpose of the C.M.M. is to secure his conversion. It is to be questioned whether anywhere finer results have been witnessed. Over and over again scenes have been enacted that have reminded one of the conversion of Frank T. Bullen, author of *With Christ at Sea*. Want of space prevents my giving more than a few illustrations of the kind of results this branch is constantly securing.

A Norwegian Sankey.—We were in the midst of a blessed revival service, when up the aisle came a sad-looking sailor-boy. All through that meeting one and another had sought to lead him into the light, but in vain. Ten o'clock arrived, and still he was in trouble. At length he made a desperate struggle, and was soon rejoicing in a sense of sins forgiven. Then he turned to us and said, 'Now I'll tell you what it was that prevented my finding peace. The ship I'm on is about as much like hell as anything well can be. The captain is a brute; my mates are more like devils than men. Only to-day I made up my mind to clear out. But as I prayed at this communion-rail it came to me that as a Christian I couldn't break my agreement and run away. That's what has made it hard. But at last the decision has come; I'll go on board and face it out.' Instantly the light came. Before going into his bunk that night this young fellow knelt down to pray. Instantly the fore-castle was in a tumult. 'Here, youngster, stack that.' He went on praying, when heavy boots were flung at his head, accompanied by fearful oaths. Still he continued on his knees. The men were perplexed, and whispered one with the other. They then turned to the lad—brutes that they were—and said, 'Look here, youngster, we'll have no ——— praying here. You have just got to quit. We'll give you five minutes to make up your mind, but mark, as sure as you are a living soul, so sure we'll run you up to

the yard-arm if you don't stop that game.' Full well he knew they would do as they threatened; and yet, trembling from head to foot, he continued on his knees. When the watch showed that time was up he was seized, taken on deck, a rope was tied round his loins, and he was literally strung up to the yard-arm. The captain coming along thought the thing a splendid joke. Expecting every moment to hear the lad cry out, they waited and watched. No sound came, and, being alarmed, they brought him down, to find that the rope had cut into his flesh and that he was almost unconscious. Thoroughly frightened, they put him into his bunk. When the brutes were asleep, one of the men stole to the side of the lad and whispered, 'I say, old man, tell me all about it. I can't stand this any longer. Pray for me, will you?' In spite of this fiendish cruelty, that lad stood true to his 'scrap of paper,' and got his discharge on completing the voyage. Our last news from him was a letter stating that he was home in Norway again, was hard at work in the church, and spent much time going through the neighbouring villages singing the gospel. 'They call me *Sankey*, and I'm proud of my name,' writes he.

The Demon of Doubt Cast Out.—The meeting was over. It was my weekly class; we had had a warm time—a real old-fashioned Yorkshire class-meeting over again. As the folk were leaving, two sailors came up and asked to be permitted to speak to me. One was an officer in uniform, the other a man before the mast. They were both in trouble. 'Can you help us?' asked the officer. The influence of the meeting had strangely impressed him, and he spoke with deep feeling. 'I'm the son of leading Methodists in Cheshire. I was brought up in the Sunday school, and joined the church, but,' added he, '*I have never been converted.* God knows I have tried long and hard, but all in vain.'

'Tell me,' I said, 'what is your difficulty?'

'Why,' said he, 'I seem to have been born "with a list to starboard," as they say. I'm swamped by doubts. As soon as I begin to pray, instantly the thought comes, "But is there really a God listening? Is Jesus Christ divine? Is the Bible true?" and all that sort of thing.'

I, some few years ago, left my father's office in Manchester and became a sailor. In London, in New York, and in lots of other places I have listened to great preachers in the hope of finding rest for my soul. It was that which brought me here to-night, and my mate also, for he is in the same boat with myself. Now, sir, oh, tell me, can you help us?'

'Look here, my good fellow,' I said to him, 'it seems to me you are trying to make salvation an intellectual process. It is nothing of the kind. It is the surrender of the soul to God. Now tell me, have you ever gone to your knees and told God you were a bad man, and needed His mercy?'

'No, sir,' he answered, in evident surprise, 'I haven't.'

'Well now, will you promise me this one thing? Will you—both of you—go straight into your cabins, lock the door, get down on your knees, and just tell God what sinners you are, and cry to Him for mercy? Tell Him that if He does not save you, you will be lost. Let this be your prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."'

They gave me their promise, and went.

That was on Tuesday. On Thursday night I met them both in the aisle of the Centenary Hall. I saw in a moment all was right with them. Reaching out my hand to the officer, I said, 'Well?'

'Yes, thank God, sir, it is well.'

With a glad heart I said, 'Now tell me all about it.'

The story was soon told. He faithfully carried out his promise, locked himself in his cabin, and on his knees cried to God for mercy. As he told God of his sins, at first it seemed like mockery. There was none to listen; but he went on telling God he was a sinful man, 'and,' added he, 'gradually the conviction stole in upon me that it was true, I *was* a bad man; and now I simply *had* to cry for mercy. The struggle of my life began. It was hard and long. But, glory be to God, at last victory came. My doubts all took to themselves wings and flew away, and I trusted Jesus for personal salvation and,' said he with eager voice and happy look, '*I've got it; yes, I've got it.*'

'And what about your mate?'

'Exactly the same, sir; we are both of us at absolute rest in Christ.'

The devil of doubt was expelled by the power of God in answer to the soul-cry of faith.

A Youthful Missionary.—In one of Mr. Gilbert's reports occurs the following: 'About nine months ago a young lad gave his heart to God at one of our Wednesday-night sailors' meetings. After the service he went to his ship, and before retiring to rest read a portion of Scripture and knelt down to pray. One of his mates, noticing this, aroused the attention of several others, and sneeringly inquired, "What's up with Pinky?" They then began to ridicule him, and one said, "He's gone mad." The lad, however, finished praying, and then got up and preached Christ to them in such a manner that they were glad to let him alone. They then retired to rest, but several of them could not sleep; the arrow thrown at a venture had found a lodging-place, and troubled them sorely. In the morning he again knelt down, and, before his mates, prayed for their salvation and that of the captain. On the following Saturday night he was found with some of his mates at the consecration service, one of whom found Christ that night. The next day, Sunday, quite a number of men off this vessel came, and at night two more found peace through believing. During the week this young missionary started a Bible-class, and most of the crew attended; and, we are glad to add, before they left the port seven others signed the temperance pledge. And all this the outcome of one sailor-lad's conversion to God.'

Conversion of a Scandinavian.—Mr. Gilbert also tells the following interesting story: 'A rough son of the sea found his way to the hall through the kindly invitation of a worker, and, having come upon us in the midst of our lively Thursday evangelistic service, was not long before he found Christ. Directly after his conversion he was desirous of writing home to tell his mother; but knowing that she would not believe him if he wrote, he asked me to write for him. This is the purport of the letter: "My dear mother,—I could not understand you when I was at home; you often used to tell me how happy you were, but I could not see anything to be happy about. But

I do now. Only a few minutes ago I got something. I don't know how to explain it, but it feels like heaven in my heart. My heart seems too small for the life that is in it. If this is what you call being converted, I wish I had been converted years ago. I shall be home soon, and then you will see for yourself. Tell Zet and Zanton not to pray for God to save me now, but for God to keep me upright before my mates.—Your affectionate son,
 ————

From Forecastle to Missionary.—A little while ago I received the following interesting letter from a friend in Valparaiso: 'I want to tell you of a Mr. ————, living in this wicked city. He is a sort of seamen's missionary, and exerts a better religious influence than does any man I know. He is a noble fellow, and is doing a splendid work amongst the sailors visiting this port. The other day he told me the story of his conversion, and I was delighted to learn that he was one of the direct fruits of the work of the Sydney C.M.M.' If our seamen's branch had done nothing but lead this one poor wanderer into the fold, it would not have laboured in vain. Mr. Gilbert's 'log' gives, in few words, the account of this good man's conversion. 'This man,' says he, 'came to us some time ago, and sought and found Christ in old Prince's Street Church. On his leaving Sydney we were able to form and set going a Christian Endeavour Floating Society. On the voyage three were led to Christ, and took the C.E. pledge; had Bible-readings and prayer-meetings every day until it became quite an established custom on board.' In a letter written to Mr. Gilbert occurs the following: 'I can never thank God sufficiently for taking notice of such a rebel as I was. Oh how blessed to know of His presence day by day! . . . Since then He has made me a fisher of men, and has given me souls.'

Mr. Gilbert supplies these still further wonderful illustrations of the transforming power of the grace of God: 'Last Sunday night the chief officer of a big ocean steamer started from Woolloomooloo wharf in a cab to visit the officer of a ship lying at Miller's Point. By mistake (?) the cabman came by way of Prince's Street. Noticing the C.M. Church in passing, a sudden and blessed impulse

siezed the man. He cried a halt, paid the man, and entered the building. Memories of a Christian wife in England strangely moved him during the service. He stayed to the after-meeting. Whilst Sister Mabel was quietly speaking to him of Christ he fell upon his knees and pleaded for God's great mercy. It was a beautiful sight to see this man in brass buttons and uniform weeping his way to the Cross. He left the meeting rejoicing in God's converting grace. Next morning I found the good man's cabin transformed. Trashy novels and questionable newspapers were removed. Sheldon's and other Christian books (the gift of the good man's wife) took their place. His fellow officers were astonished, and asked the reason. "I'm converted," was the manly reply, "and mean, by God's help, to lead a new and a better life." In a day or two the vessel left for Africa and England, carrying as its chief officer a man who had been saved through the simple mistake of a cabman.'

'Mr. J——— or "Boxer Roby Jones," as he was called in shipping circles, was the bully of the fo'c'sle—a man well brought up, fairly educated, able to converse upon any topic, trained in one of the head schools of London; but chose the sea as a living. After a few years of sea-roaming he found himself in California, where he went in, as he says, "dig licks," gambling, drinking, boxing, &c., neglecting to write to his mother and sisters. He became a pugilist of the first order in his class. He was known from one end of California to the other; had fought in every ring; until one day he got tired of the business, and sought a place on board ship and came to Sydney. At one of our concerts for seamen he was listening to a song of home, when he burst into tears, and was going away. I stopped him, and had a chat; handed him over to one of the workers, who took him into another room, and found him under deep conviction. The worker prayed with him; he prayed for himself; and before the concert was over he was rejoicing in Jesus Christ. The following is an extract from a letter received some time afterwards from him: "*Fremantle*.—Dear Mr. G.,—I'm glad to tell you I am still trusting. The fight has been much harder than the fights in the rings of America, but, thank God,

I still have the armour on, and am fighting for Jesus. I'm a wonder unto my old chums. No drink, no gambling, no swearing. What ho! when my own people know of the change! It will add years to my mother's life, especially when she looks on her boy, saved, and certainly a happy man."

Missionary Townsend, who succeeded Mr. Gilbert, also supplies me with the choicest of choice garlands, each flower representing a precious soul saved through the work done at 'The Rest.' Want of space forbids more than the briefest reference: (1) A young man runs away from home, takes to the sea, becomes an out-and-out prodigal. He comes into contact with this work, is awakened, and led to Christ. Is now at home again. (2) A home ruined by drink, husband forsaken by wife and child; reaches the bed-rock of wrongdoing. At a Sunday seamen's service is soundly converted. To-day a reunited and happy Christian family. (3) A sailor of some years' standing becomes a slave to drink and impurity. A night's debauchery leads to his being robbed and imprisoned. In our services this man is found of Christ. And so the story runs on with a blessed monotony. Personally I never cease to thank God for this 'harbour of refuge' right in the middle of this busy port—a refuge for Jack from the crimp, the girl of the kerbstone, and the red-lamped gin-palace.

Concurrently with the work among the merchant seamen, and continuing up to the time when ships of the British Navy retired from Australian waters to make way for our own Mosquito Fleet, the bluejacket had a place on the Mission's programme that was all his own. Years ago I was appointed by the British Admiralty chaplain to the Methodist men on the Australian station. By the courtesy of Miss Weston, of Portsmouth, I also became an honorary member of the Royal Naval Christian Union, enabling me to get into closest touch with the men of the Fleet. Rooms were set apart at the Centenary Hall for the use of members, and many of the men became personal workers of the Mission. Prior to my visit to England in the nineties about twenty of us were photographed. When lecturing in Portsmouth I put that picture on the

screen, leading to an outburst of enthusiasm I shall never forget. Most of the men on the picture were from Portsmouth, and some of their friends were present. The audience, packing every corner of the building, was so excited at learning what was being done for their boys in Sydney that they gave me a collection of £75 for our funds.

On several occasions a gracious revival broke out amongst 'non-coms.,' bluejackets, and marines. Every week there were conversions. I can only find space for the record of one of these blessed meetings, culled from the pages of *Our Weekly Greeting*, which please read as furnishing an illustration of the scenes so frequently witnessed.

'*A Grand Sight.*—It would be difficult to describe in cold type the wonderful after-meeting of Sunday night. The superintendent had preached to a crowded congregation on "A Plain Talk on the Final Day of Judgement." Large numbers stayed to the after-service. From start to finish the power of the Holy Ghost was present. In response to the usual invitations a large number rose for prayer, and ere the meeting closed eight young men, one elderly man, and four young women professed conversion. The notable feature about the meeting was the number of blue and red jackets, from the men-of-war at present in the harbour, who were with us. Early on in the meeting five blues and two reds were at the penitent-form. It was a touching sight to see these men being pointed to Christ by their own comrades, some of whom are themselves little more than babes in Christ. The men were in dead earnest, and ere the meeting closed the whole of them gave public testimony to the fact that God for Christ's sake had pardoned their sins. There were not many people in the hall who were not strangely moved. The preacher was in tears, and handkerchiefs were in request all over the place. One fine fellow, himself only about two months a Christian, rushed up to his comrades and shook them by the hand, throwing his arms round the neck of one young friend who had just found the Lord, and kissed him. One of the lads was overheard saying as he left the hall, "What my dear mother will say when she hears of this, I am sure I do not know. I fancy she'll jump over the chairs in the old home for very joy." Another was so overjoyed that when he got out into York Street he took off his cap

and flung it high in the air, shouting "Glory be to God!" Among the other converts were a fine young lad from Picton, a young lady from Brisbane, and another lady—a stranger—who had been a backslider for two years. While she sought Christ at the penitent-form, her husband rested on Christ in his seat in the hall.'

Such scenes as these are truly Pentecostal, and, thank God, we are permitted to witness many such. This is indeed old-time Methodism, that we would fain like to see reproduced in every circuit in the State.

I have but space for the briefest reference to another important experiment in what I have termed 'evangelistic philanthropy'—one that led to the establishment of the C.M.M. Home for the Treatment of Dipsomaniacs. In 1896, during the able superintendency of the Rev. W. W. Rutledge, a number of notorious drunkards and gamblers had been brought to God. Several of them became enthusiastic rescue-workers, and formed themselves into the 'Converted Drunkards' and Gamblers' Brigade.' Numerous meetings were held by them in and around Sydney, much good resulting. 'In a great many cases men were induced to sign the pledge,' writes Mr. Rutledge, 'and in others the deeper work of conversion resulted; but the work taken in hand recalled the necessity for the establishment of a Home into which the men could be received, and by means of which they could be removed from the almost overpowering temptations to which they would again be immediately exposed.' One suggestion followed another, resulting in the official opening of our Medical Retreat on February 22, 1897. Into the varying experiences—of success and failure—that were ours in connexion with this institution this is not the place to enter. Suffice it to say that one of the leading physicians of Sydney became our medical officer. Under the Inebriates Act we applied to the Government for a licence. The Government Committee of Advice, consisting of such leading men as the Hon. Dr. J. M. Creed, the Hon. E. W. O'Sullivan, Minister for Works, and others, approved, and ours was the first Home thus to be licensed. For a number of years this Retreat did valuable work. The percentage of permanent cures was a large one. Considerable numbers of well-known citizens were here treated,

and to-day occupy prominent positions in the Commonwealth—saved from drunkenness by the work of this Retreat. Unfortunately, as the years passed, owing to serious financial difficulties it was found necessary to close this valuable adjunct to the Mission's direct evangelistic work. To this day doubt is expressed as to the wisdom of the step taken; and there are those amongst us who look forward to a reopening of this branch of work at no distant date.

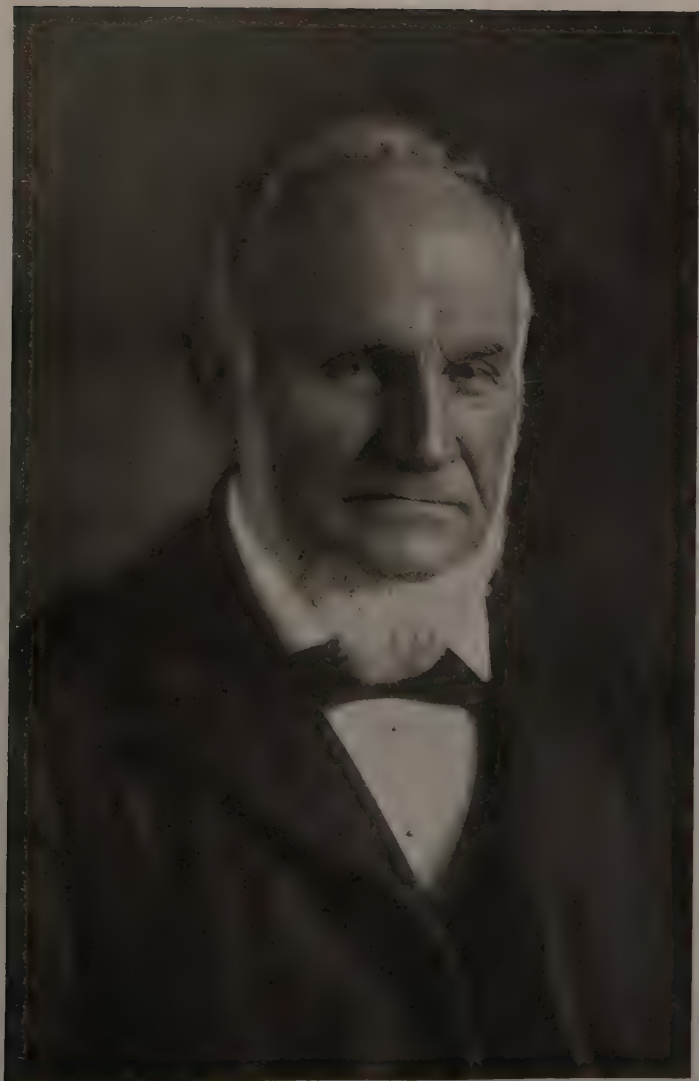
XXII

AN AUSTRALIAN PHILANTHROPIST

'To the memory of a good man'—A generous and widespread giver—A true Methodist—Big-hearted Connexionalist—His *magnum opus*—Three 'Homes' given—Big endowments—'The Vickery Tent Missions'—A paying investment—'Fifty thousand guineas and fifty thousand souls'—Pentecostal scenes—A bigger scheme still—How the Lyceum Theatre was secured—Its programme—'Conversion' of hotel, theatre, Two-up school, and two brothels—The San Francisco earthquake—Called home—*In memoriam* service tribute—The Lyceum opened—What it means.

'WHEN the history of the Sydney C.M.M. comes to be written, a very prominent chapter will need to be given to the work of that noble philanthropist, the late Hon. Ebenezer Vickery, M.L.C.' Thus wrote one of our leading citizens some years ago. And he was right. What Mr. Vickery did for this Mission will never be known. Away back in 1871 Mr. Vickery was one of the first to welcome me on my arrival from the Homeland. For many years I enjoyed his confidence, and right to the time of his death we were friends—almost more than friends.' Hence the present 'call' to place upon his grave a homely wreath—a feeble expression of respect and love for the memory of one of the greatest philanthropists yet given to Australia.

It is not my purpose in this sketch to dwell upon the extensive help rendered by him to many of the churches and charities of these lands other than to say that he was one of the founders of the Sydney Y.M.C.A., and acted as its treasurer to the time of his death. For many years he was on the Committee of Advice of the Y.W.C.A., rendering it valuable financial help. The Sydney Rescue Society, the City Mission, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and many



Crown Studios, Sydney.]

THE HON. EBENEZER VICKERY, M.L.C.

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another institution of like character regularly received help from his ever-open purse. When arrangements were made for visits to be paid us by world-renowned revivalists or temperance reformers, his was the name naturally mentioned as Treasurer of the committee.

But it was to his own Church that his heart most warmly expanded. He was a Methodist from conviction. Well do I know how he loved it, and how in the earlier days he denied himself to aid it. At a great church function over which he was called to preside I remember the noble tribute he paid to his Church, ending with these words : ' My parents were Methodists ; my mother was the first woman to lead a Methodist class in the Southern World. All my sons and daughters are Methodists, and there is not one among all my grandchildren who is not connected with this Church.' He was one of the founders of our State Sustentation and Home Missionary Society, and was appointed its first lay general secretary in 1859. It would be impossible to enumerate his gifts to this important agency of our Church. When it was decided to send to England for additional ministers, his was the purse that so largely assisted to make this possible. When a desire was expressed to form a fund for the purchasing of sites in newly opened districts, he generously provided the money, and ere he passed from us he settled upon this society the sum of £10,000. For many years he was a liberal contributor to the funds of our Foreign Missionary Society, and settled £5,000 upon it before his death. He also took the deepest personal interest in the theological training of our young ministers, and helped it largely with his contributions.

As furnishing an illustration of the generous impulses to which it was Mr. Vickery's habit to yield, it may be mentioned how he came to hear of a mistake that had been made in the internal construction of our fine church in the historic town of Parramatta, a mistake of so serious a character as to render the carrying on of our work there a very difficult problem. Learning that the congregation was not in a position to put things right, Mr. Vickery called for an architect's report, and paid the entire cost of the remodelling of the interior of the church. All this, and much more, illustrates the earnestness with which our old

friend laid himself out to do good with the means that had come into his hands.

It was the Sydney Central Mission, however, that provided Mr. Vickery, financially and sympathetically, with the opportunity to do the *magnum opus* of his life. In its very early days—our darkest days—he became intimately interested in the experiment decided upon by the Conference. An evangelist to the tips of his fingers, the new aggressive propaganda appealed to him. It was at that time Mr. Vickery became my guide, philosopher, and friend. His office was always open to me, and he was ever ready with his counsel. When, at the Conference of 1889, the Mission was established upon a Connexional basis, his was the guiding hand that largely shaped its programme and decided upon its methods; his was the first name suggested to act upon its committee; and throughout the remaining years of his life he was rarely absent from its monthly meetings.

Well do I remember the enthusiasm with which he threw himself into the Committee's plans for establishing a Home for the training of evangelists. His idea was to aim at sending forth men of the Spartan order, ready to rough it, and anxious for immediate results in the saving of souls.

As already stated, when, a year later, I had committed the Mission to the opening of a Home for 'Sisters of the People,' it was he who rendered the venture possible by placing suitable premises at our disposal free of rent. This generous act was repeated three years later, when the ladies of the Mission desired to start a Rescue Home for Waifs and Strays, by his placing in their hand a large three-storied house.

Four years after this, in 1897, when Mr. Rutledge, the then superintendent, felt drawn to establish a Medical Retreat for the Treatment of Dipsomaniacs, once again Mr. Vickery stepped into the breach and provided the necessary premises.

It has often been borne in upon me that but for his active interest our Alexandra Rescue Home for Girls might never have been started. Three times I knocked at the committee door urging that action be taken to deal practically with this problem of the girl of the kerbstone.

Each time the answer was sympathetic, but the ominous cry of 'No funds' blocked us. Well do I remember the night when Mr. Vickery first championed the cause. 'Mr. President,' said he, 'we must do something. Let us make the experiment.' The next day was spent by the two of us inspecting premises. Providentially the Burwood property was amongst them. At once, through Mr. Vickery's action, it was secured, and this blessed work of rescue thus made possible. It only remains to be mentioned in this connexion that several years before his death he invested some £5,000, the interest of which was to be devoted to the general work of the C.M.M. This continues to secure to the Mission an income equal to several hundreds of pounds per year.

Closely associated with the C.M.M. was the starting of that remarkable work known as 'The Vickery Tent Missions.' The genesis of the idea was as simple as it was providential. In the year 1901 the various denominations united in a simultaneous mission throughout Sydney and suburbs. In one or two areas tents had to be provided. In one of these, erected on waste land at Waverley, one night Mr. Vickery was seated. As he next morning explained to me, a strange and blessed influence came upon him. It was one of the inspirational moments of his life. 'If this is good for Waverley, then why not for the whole State?' was the thought that possessed him. The great tent-mission scheme was born that night. Next morning he sent for me to his office, and explained what had happened, and at once propounded plans for the building of a small parlour tent to seat 100 persons, and to send this throughout the State in charge of trusted evangelists. The scheme was good, but not big enough; and ere the interview closed orders had been given for a tent—and furniture—capable of accommodating 300 persons. I was fortunate in securing permission to erect the new tent in the Government Domain, and there, on December 26, 1901, an all-day Convention was held. That day will never be forgotten by any who were present. Leading ministers and laymen delivered burning addresses on various phases of evangelism. During the evening session a blessed outpouring of the Holy Ghost was witnessed. Many cried aloud for mercy, and quite a

number found their way to the Cross. That settled the question. This idea was from God, and it must be allowed to grow; and grow it did, and in a remarkable fashion. Tent after tent was built, one to seat 400, another 600, still another 1,000. The tent-maker was kept busy. In all there must have been ten or twelve tents ere long in use, one of them capable of seating 1,200 people, each fitted with acetylene gas, an organ, platform, and seats. Missioners from all over Australia, and from England, were engaged, who, together with assistants and tent attendants, went over the State conducting mission services.

Naturally all this entailed a large amount of work upon Mr. Vickery. At my suggestion he engaged a clerk to attend to details. Several of us spent much time in conference with the promoter, but in reality most of the organizing was done by Mr. Vickery himself. One day I happened to say to him, 'This thing is going to cost you a lot of money.' 'Yes,' was the good man's answer, 'I can see already that it will come to £10,000' (in point of fact it came to considerably more than that); 'but,' added he, with the tears in his eyes, 'I have never in my life made an investment that has brought in such a dividend as this already has done.'

Concurrently with the inauguration of this movement the Rev. Rainsford Bavin was going through the State establishing a Connexional 'Century Fund' of 50,000 guineas. 'That is good,' said Mr. Vickery, 'but better still if we can get 50,000 souls!' That became his goal. Whether it was reached or not we may never know, but certain it is that during those stirring months many thousands were brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Some of these to-day are ministers in various parts of the Commonwealth or missionaries in the South Seas, whilst many others are to be found filling responsible positions in every department of the Church's work. For details of this Apostolic work I must refer my readers to Colwell's *History of Methodism in New South Wales*, pages 625-640. Personally I have never known a work like it. On many occasions it was my privilege to conduct meetings in various tents. On November, 1902, accompanied by Mr. Vickery, I took the service at the small

town of Penrith. The whole place seemed alive with interest. The huge tent was crowded, and the power of God was gloriously present. What the old Methodists were wont to call 'a break-down' followed, and soon we were all busy pointing the people to Christ. A little later on we were speaking in the Balmain tent. The powers of evil were present in strong force. The fight was hard and constant, but victory was ours, and ere the service closed twenty persons had professed conversion. These incidents are mentioned merely as illustrations of what was taking place in various parts of the State.

One of the tents—that originally dedicated to God in the Domain—was handed over to me. It was everywhere known as the C.M.M. tent. All the expenses were borne by Mr. Vickery, but the agents were appointed by us. Evangelists Walker and Allison, and our Seamen's Missionary, Mr. H. D. Gilbert, were given a roving commission, and sent through the country to win souls for Christ. It was here that Mr. Walker gained the experience that ultimately led to his being appointed Connexional Evangelist. Wonderful scenes were witnessed in this tent, and many a golden harvest reaped.

At Balmain the work developed in so remarkable a manner that Mr. Vickery decided to purchase a property and to erect a hall for the permanent carrying on of the same. This entailed the expenditure of several thousands of pounds. But this was cheerfully borne by our good friend, together with the salaries of the Barratt brothers as evangelists. The title-deeds of 'The Helping Hand Mission-hall,' as it was called, were ultimately handed over to the C.M.M., to be worked by its Committee.

Still the restless but generous heart of Mr. Vickery was not satisfied, and there followed a course of events of so unique a character as to call for the furnishing of details. One morning my office telephone rang, and a voice called, 'Come over to my room; I want to have a talk with you.' It was the voice of my old friend. The good man had a great scheme in his mind, and as he proceeded to unfold it I sat like one in a dream. 'For some years past,' said he, 'it has been in my heart to do something for my Church in this city that will be of permanent value, and I wish to do it in connexion with the Central Mission.'

He then propounded his scheme, which included the purchase or erection of a large hall, to take the place of the Centenary Hall, and to be surrounded by a block of premises for the carrying on of all sorts of social, educational, and philanthropic work on the lines of a pronounced evangelism. He handed me a list, containing suggestions bearing upon some thirty lines of service, mostly such as have since been carried on by the Committee of the Mission. He ended by saying, 'I have got a property under offer. Come and let us inspect it.' The premises were central and included a family hotel, together with a hall capable of seating a thousand people, but could scarcely be made suitable for so comprehensive a scheme as was in Mr. Vickery's mind.

That afternoon I was again rung up. 'I've just heard that the Lyceum Theatre, in Pitt and Castlereagh Streets, is in the market. Let us go and see it.' Never shall I forget that inspection. Together we examined every flat in that seven-storied hotel, went through the theatre, penetrating into dark cellars where the stage thunder was wont to be made, through long suites of dressing and property-rooms, and up into the various galleries. Standing in the semi-darkness of the dress circle, I ventured to put my hand upon Mr. Vickery's shoulder and said, 'Sir, this is the property. By all means secure it, and let the other one go.' 'But,' answered he, 'the figure asked for this is beyond what was in my mind.' 'Never mind,' was the retort; 'you have got the money, and can afford it. This is the chance of a lifetime.'

I went direct to my office, locked the door, and fell upon my knees in prayer that God would guide His servant to do what was right. I then sat down and wrote a letter urging the purchase of the Lyceum. Anxiously I awaited the answer. The next afternoon it came in a brief telephone message: 'I have purchased the Lyceum Theatre.' I am not going to narrate what occurred in my office during the next half-hour. Suffice it to say that in order to give completeness to the scheme Mr. Vickery ultimately purchased a large adjoining property in Castlereagh Street, and thus by one stroke of his pen he secured the closing of a city theatre, an immense hotel, a 'Two-up School' or gambling-saloon—one of the worst

of the city—and two notorious brothels, at once taking steps for the entire property to be converted to purposes of up-to-date and aggressive evangelism. As illustrating the thoroughness of our friend's methods, it may be mentioned that it cost him over £1,000 to secure the immediate removal of the publican, with the cancelling of his licence. Elsewhere I have told the story of our immediate work in the theatre for after-church services, and in the 'Two-up School' for a special mission to drunks, gamblers, and dead-beats. Later on the whole buildings were remodelled, new premises were erected, and on the sale of the old Centenary Hall the 'Vickery Mission Settlement Buildings' became the head centre of Central Mission operations.

The following description of this great property, written by my old friend and fellow worker, Mr. P. N. Slade, J.P., the honorary secretary of the Mission, will be read with deepest interest:

'We thank God for the wonderful opportunity the late Hon. E. Vickery has given the Mission to enlarge and extend the borders. We believe that no Central Mission in any part of the world has such adequate and up-to-date premises, and after the cramped conditions under which the work was carried on for so many years at the Centenary Hall, it would be difficult to realize with what hope and joy we enter upon this new era in our history.

'Very little of the old theatre has been left standing, whilst the old cottages of ill-fame in Castlereagh Street and the notorious "Two-up School," together with all the surrounding evils, have been swept entirely away.

'The following brief summary will give a fair idea of the extensive character of this great block, reaching right through from Pitt to Castlereagh Street, in the very busiest part of the city:

'The large hall, with seating capacity for about 2,500, and in which 3,000 have been crowded, is up to date in every respect. With the ample exits provided, numbering twelve, the hall can be emptied in two and a half minutes. The sloping floors and small pillars allow the whole audience to see the platform comfortably, and, with the excellent acoustic conditions, to hear with ease an ordinary speaker. The entire building is amply lighted by electricity, and

presents a very imposing and pleasing appearance, especially at night-time.

'Adjacent to the hall are a number of rooms for the use of the lessee, ladies' and gentlemen's cloak-rooms, with choir and orchestra-room, &c. Above the organ are four fine rooms, in which we hope to house a dozen evangelists; whilst above these again is a room about 58 feet by 30 feet, in which it is proposed to provide cheap beds for men out of work.

'On the ground floor, facing Castlereagh Street, are four shops, one of which will be occupied by the Mission as a tea and luncheon café, the others being let to tenants. Behind these are the workmen's dining-room, a committee-room, and the Conference Hall, capable of seating 600 persons. With excellent light and ventilation provided, and placed as it is in the very centre of the block, removed from the street, this hall will fill a great want both in the Mission and the Methodist Church generally. Week-night meetings, Conference and Synod sessions, can be held here in comfort.

'The first floor is occupied by C.M.M. offices, Home Mission offices, Local Preachers' Association, young men's room, social and committee-rooms, kitchens, and a fine physical culture and recreation hall. We also hope to secure the University Christian Students' Union as tenants of the remaining offices on this flat.

'On the second floor will be found Foreign Mission offices and museum, Ladies' Committee-room, young women's room, W.C.T.U. office, Boys' Club-room, rooms for the use of the Sunday-school department and the Sydney Women's Prayer Union; also five workmen's dormitories.

'Here also is placed the Board Room, 44 feet by 15½ feet, in which the Connexional Committees and the large C.M.M. classes will hold their meetings.

'The third floor will provide splendid accommodation for the C.M.M. Settlement quarters, in which we hope to secure young men as residents who will give their time to the work of the Mission. There are also at the back of the buildings five very comfortable rooms, in which the "Sisters of the People" will reside. A fine room on this flat has also been set apart for the use of ministers of our Church.

'The caretaker's quarters are provided on the fourth floor.

'Equipped throughout with all necessary lavatories, fire-escapes, electric elevators, and everywhere substantially constructed, this huge pile of buildings, with a floor space of about 70,000 square feet, or nearly two acres, with two halls, and over 130 rooms of various sizes, gives us a chance of which there is no equal—in the Commonwealth, at any rate—of doing a work of rescue and reform that should certainly help in a very definite form in the winning of this great city for Jesus Christ.'

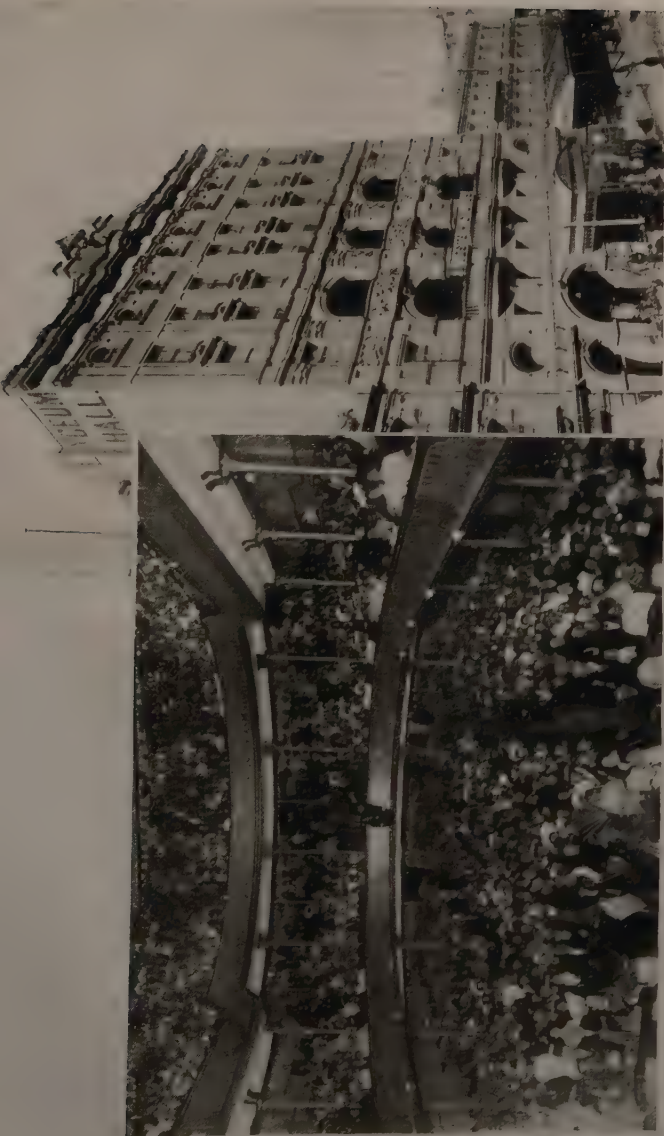
Alas, Mr. Vickery was not permitted to live to see the full carrying out of his plans. Not long after the acquisition of the premises he left Sydney for a visit to America and Europe, largely influenced thereto by the hope of adding to his knowledge of philanthropic and evangelistic methods. He was in California at the time of the dreadful earthquake, that meant the death of so large a number of people. His escape was remarkable, persons sleeping in the next room to him being killed, whilst he was untouched. Whilst in London he was taken ill, and on August 20, 1906, in the city of Leeds, he peacefully passed away.

An *in memoriam* service was conducted in the beautiful church at Waverley, towards the erection of which he had contributed in so princely a fashion. From my notes of that service I cull the following: 'He has gone from us, and we shall sadly miss his counsel and his friendship. Naturally we mourn that he should have been called away whilst absent from his family and from the friendships and the scenes of a long lifetime. But he was ready. The long journey, covering a period of four-score years, and full of strenuous and blessed service, was over. His house was in order, and we have no doubt he faced his summons with the calm fortitude and the simple faith that were so characteristic of the man. . . . For seventy-two years he lived in Sydney. It was given to him to watch the remarkable developments of this State as few others have done. He grew with its growth, and put the impress of his strong personality upon much of its commercial and religious life. The daily Press has traced this remarkable record with facile pen. We have seen the man diligent, persistent, simple, honourable, gradually

forging his way to the forefront of things ; and for it all we have devoutly thanked God. . . . Full and strenuous as it was, his life was yet one of the best illustrations of what is known as the simple life. What is vaguely spoken of as Society life had no charms for him. Life was too serious to be frittered away in inane frivolities. His business, his Church, his family, his duties to the State as Member of Parliament, and his philanthropies—these constituted the all-absorbing interests of his life.

‘ Though always a man of the strongest convictions he was yet one of the most tender-hearted of men. I have seen the tears run down his face at some simple record of sorrow or of need. I have seen his eyes sparkle and fill with tears of joy as he has listened to stories of the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Often when it has been my privilege to carry to him the good news of conversions, of bad men or women rescued, I have seen a peculiar tremor of the lip, followed by silence, and then a look such as one may never forget, and but one quiet word, “ I am very glad.” At one sad moment I was permitted to see into the very heart of the man. It was when the news arrived of a dreadful gas explosion in the Mount Kembla coal-mine. I was with him in that little private room of his above his office. The whole man was bowed and stricken with grief. In the midst of sobs that almost overpowered him he said, “ Oh to think of this ! Our one first and chief concern has always been the safety and the comfort of our men ; and now to think of this ! ” As we knelt side by side in that little room, it seemed to me as if I were permitted to see into the very soul of a good and of a great man.’

Two years had passed before the extensive alterations and additions to the Lyceum property, involving an expenditure of over £27,000, had been completed ; and on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, September 20 to 22, 1908, the official opening of ‘ The Vickery Mission Settlement ’ premises took place. It was a great occasion, with the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, B.A., LL.D., as special preacher, the Premier of the State, the President of the Conference, with numerous distinguished ministers and laymen, taking part. It was fitting that Mr. Ebenezer



Crown Studios, Sydney.

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR VIEWS OF THE LYCEUM HALL.

Vickery, worthy son of so noble a father, should preside. Thus was launched a scheme, the conception of a great and generous mind, that has more than fulfilled the hopes of the Committee and of the community generally. It only remains to be added that the trustees appointed by Mr. Vickery have since found it possible, in carrying out the wishes of their father, to hand over this magnificent property to the Methodist Church to be used to the glory of God and for the saving of the people on lines carefully laid down in the original settlement by the generous donor.

The Lyceum to-day not only rejoices that its congregation is the largest in the Southern World, but also that for practically every Sunday in all these years the cry of the penitent has been heard and men have been brought to God. On my retiring from the superintendency, my beloved and able colleague, the Rev. P. J. Stephens, assumed control. Twelve months since for health reasons he had to relinquish the reins to the present superintendent, the Rev. S. J. Hoban, who, with distinguished ability and a wealth of sympathetic enthusiasm, continues to maintain the very highest traditions of the place. Fitted as he is by nature and by grace not only to carry on, but to advance, the work, it requires no great foresight to prophesy that the best days of the C.M.M. are yet to come. Only last Sunday I preached from its platform for Mr. Hoban to over 2,000 people. From start to finish the atmosphere was electric with a force not human. The workers, as always, were powerful and expectant. Some strange spell was upon both preacher and people. The appeal was for an immediate surrender to God, a cry to the people to 'set their house in order.' 'All you,' was the final call, 'who from this moment are prepared to put God first, and to seek, through Christ, for the new life, stand up.' Within a few moments, in every part of the building, crowds were silently, solemnly standing before God. The stillness was awesome. The Holy Ghost filled the place. Can it be wondered at that with scenes like this so frequently taking place the C.M.M. to-day is recognized as probably the leading aggressive evangelistic force in these Southern lands?

XXIII

A HANDFUL OF TOUGH PROBLEMS: MONEY, MUSIC, CRANKS, AMUSEMENTS, THE PRESS

Complex machinery—Hard nuts to crack—Piety and purses—Wrecked on rocks of £ s. d.—A big price to pay—Methodists a well-to-do people—Nine millions in our banks—Money in wrong place—Influence of music—Our first musical director—A rising musician—Mrs. Grundy at work—‘Knocked off his pins’—‘Such singing!’—Our first brass band—Faddists, grumblers, stingy folk, and anonymous scribblers—Religious quacks—‘Gone past the Ten Commandments’—‘Off to Rome’—Institutional Church—Ignominious failure—A £1,000 gift—‘People’s Entertainments’—Paint, gas, and printer’s ink—C.M.M. leaflets—Our Newspaper.

THE modern Church, in some very important practical details, has a goodly distance to travel ere it can hope to reach the halcyon days of the coming millennium; and, as it seems to me, it has in more than one direction strangely backslidden from the original faith ‘once delivered unto the saints.’ The Church of to-day is a complex piece of machinery that only experts and specialists can thoroughly understand. Christian work is not all simple sailing, and even evangelism has attached to it parasitic growths that act as thorns in the flesh of devout Christian toilers. In this story I have hitherto written concerning the many difficult outside problems that a man is called to face when in charge of work like that of this C.M.M. To-day I am prompted to attempt the cracking of some hard nuts, the solution of some tough problems, that are to be found within the scope of the work itself. Let me write of them in due order:

First: *Money!*

When will the Church begin to run on smooth, well-oiled lines so far as its finances are concerned? When will Christ come into possession of His own as it relates to the purses and cash-books of His people? The one fly in the

ointment, the one discord in the music, of my ministry has been this ever-present and ever-pressing problem of money. What the Church needs just now is a re-enacting of the scene depicted in the sixth chapter of the Acts. Why should men ordained to the holy and spiritual work of the Christian ministry have their lives materialized by this ever-insistent question of *£ s. d.*? Many a ministerial voyage that started full of hope has ended in disaster upon the cruel rocks of finance. Some of the noblest and the best of God's ambassadors have had their careers darkened and even shortened by this incubus of money-raising. The great Dr. Punshon died in his fifty-seventh year, worn out largely by the financial strain of the Mission House. I have heard W. H. Tindall state that he had no doubt whatever but that his friend Hugh Price Hughes, so suddenly cut down in his prime, might have lived many years longer but for the stress and strain of the financial side of the West London Mission. My old friend, the Rev. A. R. Edgar, founder of the Melbourne Central Mission, among other influences was worn by anxiety to make the Mission finances balance. How Mr. Collier, of the Manchester Mission, and others in like positions in the Homeland stand the strain I know not. Nature plays no pranks, and a big price must needs be paid by all who thus essay to carry burdens heavy enough for a dozen men to bear. I write warmly because I feel warmly. Something is radically wrong with a Church that puts men into positions such as these, and then leaves them very largely to shape their own destiny, which, alas, in not a few cases means an early break-down. I confess to a feeling of wonder that through all these years I have weathered the strain of financial worry that has been cast upon me. The late Dr. Moulton once said to me, 'Taylor, you are a miracle. According to all the known laws of Nature you ought to have been dead years ago, and yet here you are going at it full steam ahead as usual.' Others have spoken in the same strain, and in point of fact many times since the Mission was started in 1884 I have been on the point of a collapse. That I am alive and strong this day is surely but an illustration of the psalmist's grateful outburst, 'This is the Lord's doing: it is marvellous in our eyes.'

Let me explain. The cost of working this Mission has grown year by year, until last year it represented the large sum of £12,000. To raise such an amount has always meant a big tug at the energies of the superintendent. True, the people of the Mission give nobly, last year the collections at the Lyceum averaging £24 per Sunday. But, oh, this ceaseless headaching, heart-wearing worry to make both ends meet! I am glad to say it has been done, and at this present writing, owing chiefly to the herculean efforts of the new superintendent, the Rev. S. J. Hoban, there is not a farthing of debt upon the current account or upon any of its buildings. But the strain upon the superintendent has always been of the severest, and certainly some method ought to be devised that will lighten this burden of anxiety in the future.

The Methodists—of England and of Australia alike—are really a well-to-do people. They are not wasteful, but thrifty. One of our leading ministers the other day wrote an illuminating article in one of our journals, based upon the Government returns of money at present invested in the Savings and other banks of this State, in which he showed that, judged by the law of averages, the Methodists have at a very modest computation the sum of nine millions sterling to their credit in the banks of New South Wales alone.

But the money, a good deal of it, is in the wrong place. That is the trouble! If our people could but be induced to bring their consciences to bear upon their bank-books and purse-strings, and give systematically and proportionately, there would be money enough to keep every agency of the Church free from debt and from that nightmare of worry that at present is beclouding the life of some of our best and ablest men. And our people themselves would be none the poorer for such an enlargement in heart and hand.

Second: *Music.*

I would give much for a virile pen at this moment. Were I able to tell what I know of the sacred influence of the music of the C.M.M., few would read the record with dry eyes. Through all these years its music, with prayer as its handmaid, has carried its message of hope

into thousands of hearts. Legh Richmond's words are still strictly true: 'I am persuaded that music is designed to prepare for heaven, to educate for the choral enjoyment of Paradise, to form the mind to virtue and devotion, and to charm away evil and sanctify the heart to God.' But these words do not carry us far enough. 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast'—that leads me nearer to what I desire to express. Instances have already been cited of notoriously wicked men won for God through the influence of the Mission's music. These are but illustrations of what has been going on for over thirty years.

When in 1889 the work received its Connexional impress, we determined that music should have a prominent place upon its programme. I had sat by the side of Hugh Price Hughes on the platform of St. James's Hall and watched my old friend Heath Mills getting the gospel message home amongst those 3,000 people by means of his trained choir and orchestra, and said to myself, 'If in London, why not in Sydney?'

We decided upon two things: the man selected as musical director must be a godly man, and in sympathy with our methods of aggressive evangelism. We gave ourselves to prayer, and soon the right man appeared in the person of Mr. W. I. B. Mote, an able musician and a devout Christian. Mr. Mote brought his wife and family into the work, and gave us of his best for the long period of twenty-six years. One of his sons, too young to help in the singing, was wont to climb upon the organ stool to help the organist manipulate the stops. Later on that child was converted in the Mission, became secretary of its adult Bible-class, and was appointed organist. After a brilliant career at the University, he took his M.A. degree, and developed talent as a musical composer, one of his oratorios being performed in the City Hall before an enthusiastic audience of 4,000 people. Later on he went to London and studied under Sir F. Bridge, the famous organist of Westminster Abbey. A still younger son followed his brother through the University with equally brilliant results, and afterwards became our trusted and capable organist.

The orchestra was a new feature in Australian church

work. At first Mrs. Grundy got to work. Many foolish and some unjust things were said and written about our new venture. A leading Presbyterian divine, one Sunday afternoon, gave an address at the annual meeting of our Seamen's Mission branch. At these 'People's Meetings' we have encouraged our hearers to show their approval of the points of the speakers. Largely composed as they are of non-churchgoers, we purposely made the meetings as unconventional as possible. This gave umbrage to our distinguished visitor. Meeting him next day, he accosted me with, 'I say, that was an extraordinary meeting of yours yesterday afternoon, but one part greatly upset me; I do not believe in this clapping of hands in a religious meeting.' 'No, Doctor?' I slyly retorted. 'But if I am not mistaken you clapped yours as vigorously as any who were present!' The good man was knocked off his pins, and, blushing to his ears, replied, 'Well, well, I believe I did. But look here,' he added, 'you have made a serious mistake in introducing that orchestra into your services. It grates upon one. It is wrong; it savours of the theatre and the music-hall.' I confess that this nettled me for the moment, and I retorted, 'Look here, Doctor, take my advice, and until you remove that "kist o' whustles" out of your own kirk, pray leave our orchestra alone, for isn't a church organ supposed to contain a full orchestra in itself?' The good man was offended, and it took months for him to change his viewpoint. But he did, and became one of our warmest supporters.

But to return to Mr. Mote. He stipulated that every choir practice should be opened with prayer, and made it clear from the start that the C.M.M. singing was to be of the heartiest as well as of the best. In no part of the world have I listened to better singing than at our Sunday-night people's service. With a choir of sixty or seventy voices, an orchestra of twenty instruments, an organist and a conductor both in the spirit of the thing, backed by an unconventional congregation of 2,000 people, singing 'not as a religious duty, but for the sheer joy of singing,' tell me of anything better if you can. Over and over again distinguished visitors from America or Europe have stated that they had never heard anything like it. And,

better still, many a weary man and woman has thus been sung into the Kingdom. That has always been our objective.

A similar story might be written of the music introduced into our street work. Elsewhere ¹ I have told of our first cabinet organ and its 'gospel chariot.' Well, in 1890 there one day came a rugged-looking fellow into my office, a recent arrival from Yorkshire; and, strangely enough, ere he left I made the discovery that he had been a boy in my own Sunday-school class in Middlesbrough. In his broadest Yorkshire he suggested that we should start a brass band. At first I shook my head. The crude street-band music of Sydney evangelists had not appealed to me. I was especially hostile to the big drum. On the other hand, that organ of ours was not satisfactory, and in a moment of what at the time I felt to be weakness I yielded.

'How much would the instruments cost?' I ventured to ask.

'Oh, about £50,' was friend Huegill's answer, 'and,' added he, 'that will be the entire cost; I'll teach some of the new converts to play, and I'll charge you nothing for my services.'

'Go and buy the instruments,' said I, 'and bring me the bill.'

When the account came in I found myself responsible for £97. However, the money was raised, and then the agony began! I cannot describe what we suffered at the parsonage during the next three months. The practice-room was a wooden structure within a few feet of my study. The sixteen pupils—most of them new converts—knew as much about music as I do about the canals on the planet Mars. It was awful! But out of that chaos my Yorkshire friend soon evolved music good enough to supersede the cabinet organ. That is over twenty-six years ago. Mr. Huegill is with us still. He and his band have rendered a service to the Mission that can never be estimated. In later years Mr. James Gilmour, jun., son of our organizing secretary, commenced a second band, which soon won for itself quite a reputation, being successful in carrying off valuable prizes at public band contests.

¹ See pages 135, 244.

Its players were young men, most of whom have been led to offer their services to their country (the C.M.M. has, up to the time of writing, already sent over 150 young men to the front), and so No. 2 has, for the time being, had to be disbanded.

Third : *Cranks*.

Under this head I include faddists, grumblers, stingy folk, and anonymous letter-writers—an unholy quartette ! Can anybody explain to me how it is that whenever a genuine work of revival breaks out the religious nondescripts in the district immediately turn their attention thereto ? I wish some of our psychological savants would direct their thoughts to this problem, and give those of us who are called to suffer the benefit of their investigations. I should be glad to supply them with bushels of informative facts. Said a gentlemen to me in the city of Dunedin, New Zealand, 'How is it that a C.M.M. becomes a sort of cave of Adullam ?' My answer was, 'I don't know, and do not believe that it is so.' And yet there is truth in the charge. Personally I have 'suffered many things' at the hands of these religious quacks : men with axes to grind ; who quarrel with every ordinary church method, who creep in amongst new converts in order to teach them 'a more excellent way,' who come knocking at one's door with their newly discovered nostrum for curing every woe of the soul ; girls who will persist in distributing upsetting literature on the pavement at the close of our services ; men who grumble and give nothing ; and, above all, men who pester one with anonymous letters, containing poisoned arrows and deadly snake-bite attacks. Oh, why should the wheels of the gospel chariot have to be clogged with such-like ? And yet perhaps they are sent to buffet us, as was Paul's 'messenger of Satan,' his 'thorn in the flesh,' for our own good.

One day two ladies travelled some miles into Sydney, their consciences charged with the responsibility of seeking my conversion. And yet one of them was one of my own spiritual children, who had been an A.I. worker amongst us until one of these cranks got hold of her.

Another got into my house one day, and before I could stop her charged upon me with an avalanche of talk about her freedom from the law, and so on. Upon my reminding

her of the Ten Commandments, she hastily replied, 'Oh, I've left the Ten Commandments behind me long ago.' Rising from my seat, and looking her in the face, I said, 'Excuse me, madam, I am going to see that my silver spoons are safe.'

Let me give you an extract or two from old notebooks illustrative of my point :

'An amusing illustration of the lengths to which foolish prejudice may lead people is furnished by a young lady from the country who has always professed the greatest admiration for our work. On anniversary Sunday morning she attended the hall service, and was so shocked by "the Romeward tendency of the service" that when night came she stayed at home, afraid to enter the dangerous place. The head and front of our offending lay in the fact that we sang "Amen" at the end of such hymns as were prayerful in their spirit; and, worse still, united in singing the Lord's Prayer. We are not sure, but we believe our friend's Protestant sense was further shocked by the alternate reading of the Psalms by the congregation. It is very funny how some people love to charge even the most insignificant changes in the form of religious worship to a "going over to Rome." The idea of the C.M.M. taking that journey is altogether too amusing.'

“*Quit your Meanness.*”—The redoubtable Sam Jones never uttered a more needed word. We are ready to work our fingers off for “the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind,” but we can't stand the meanness of people who give far less every week to God than they spend in smoke and sweets. . . . The C.M.M. caters for rich and poor alike—for Government House, if need be, and for “the Rocks.” The poorest, the most forlorn, and the saddest are as welcome as the cheeriest and the wealthiest. . . . And yet there is one exception—only one: we have no special welcome for mean people. And, alas, there are crowds of such in this peculiar world, and occasionally they get inside the Centenary Hall—people who struggle for the best seats and for the best-preserved hymn-book, and are full of smiles for the courteous steward but are always deeply interested in the ornamental work

above the organ when the collection-plate comes round. . . . The most curious fact about the whole thing is that it is not the poorly clad folk who bow to the collection-plate, but those who are well dressed ; folk who evidently have plenty of money for their pleasures and their persons, but little or nothing for the work of God.'

An article in *Our Weekly Greeting* contains the following : ' It is a wonder that our "super" has got any hair on the top of his head. His peculiar position at the head of this great work makes him the butt of the cynic, the faddist, and the anonymous scribbler. The latter always prefers to fire his shot from behind a stone wall. To write a letter without attaching a signature is the work of a coward. Our office receives many of these poisoned arrows. Written with a view to annoy, they fail of their purpose. Generally they are destroyed without reading. If read at all, they are handed round the office—a good laugh, and then the waste-paper basket.'

But it must not be lost sight of that many a so-called crank may be but a good man in a wrong place. This much must needs be said in all fairness. Over and over again men have come to us who had been thorns in the sides of their fellow members. Whether it has been that change of atmosphere has performed a cure or not, I cannot say, but I can think of some such—only a few possibly out of the many—who have developed amongst us to be acceptable and successful workers.

Fourth : *Amusements.*

Perhaps I am unfortunate in the choice of this word. 'Entertainments' or 'recreations' might serve my purpose better. What I want to impress upon my readers is that, whilst by no means over head and ears in love with the programme of the modern 'Institutional Church,' I am certainly not a disciple of the Rev. Archibald G. Brown. In a many-sided work such as this, with its innumerable agencies, seeking to save both the bodies and the souls of the people, you must arrange for more than prayer-meetings and open-air services. Whether wisely or unwisely, this Mission has sought to provide healthy entertainment for non-churchgoing people, and with the best of results.

And so the Mission has had its Ramblers' Club, its Literary and Debating Society, its physical culture classes, its Chess Club, its free reading-room and book-stalls, its gymnasium and Boys' Institute, its Girls' Brigade, its seamen's go-as-you-please concerts, its camp-meetings and picnics, its social hours, and its Cricket and Rowing Clubs. Some of these have, as per usual, been but short-lived, and subject to occasional resurrections, but others are with us to this day. Our first venture in the formation of a Cricket Club was doomed to tragic failure. An apparently fine young fellow, who had at one time served a term in prison, but had professed conversion, at one of our services, was appointed secretary. Into his hands were placed the accumulated contributions of the members for the purchase of the necessary outfit. Alas, the poor fellow made away with the money. Shortly afterwards he was detected in an act of theft, was sent to jail, and shortly afterwards committed suicide in his cell.

One day our old friend the Hon. E. Vickery took me to a large room near his office that I found to be filled with a travelling entertainer's phonographic and cinematographic plant, that had cost over £1,000. It was at the time when these things were new and little known. Mr. Vickery had lent a man £500 on the security of this plant. Shortly afterwards he failed, and left the whole show in our friend's hands. 'Can you make use of them,' asked he, 'if I send them round to the Mission?' Naturally I jumped at the offer, and found them of immense help to us in our Wednesday evening 'People's Entertainments,' which we ran every winter for quite a number of years. The good that these gatherings did will never be known. Our audiences averaged about 1,000, often reaching twice that number. Every programme was such as would not clash with our opening prayer. It generally consisted of concert, lantern exhibition, or lecture by some popular minister or layman. Besides largely supplementing the funds, these weekly meetings for non-churchgoers influenced thousands to attend our Sunday services, in many cases leading to their conversion. Need I add, after all that has been written in these pages, that all such efforts have always been made subservient to the one purpose of leading the people to Christ?

Fifth : *The Press.*

I have often ventured the remark that in church work, if we wish to impress ourselves upon the outside world—and as I take it that is one of the great purposes for which the Church exists—we should never be afraid of three items of expenditure, viz. for paint, gas, and printer's ink. Some churches are run as if they were close corporations or religious clubs. It has always been our endeavour to keep this work in close touch with pressmen. At first they were like the police force, that did not understand us; but one day, when in conversation with a police-inspector, this confession was made: 'We have watched your work, and have found out that you are greatly helping us in ours. Your Mission stands for good citizenship. You are succeeding in improving the tone of things. And so, please understand, we are at your call for any service you wish us to render.' It was also thus with the editors of our leading dailies. At first they criticized us, but gradually came to see what the C.M.M. stood for, and for years past their columns have been generously used to advertise our work.

From the start we sought to reach the man of the street, and the crowds outside all churches, by means of illustrated handbills that were every week distributed by the thousand. One of these—'our red handbill,' with a large picture showing the Centenary Hall filled with people—did an immense amount of good. Many a convert has said to us, 'But for that bill I should never have been here.'

Gradually we realized the necessity for a further step, and proceeded to issue leaflets of our own, giving details of remarkable conversions and the like. Hundreds of thousands of these have found their way into the hospitals, other public institutions, and into the homes of the people.

In addition to a liberal use of the advertising columns of the newspapers, we later on decided upon a little periodical of our own. We gave it the name of *Our Weekly Greeting*, and on May 5, 1900, we sent forth our first issue of 3,000 copies—a modest four-page broadsheet, destined to aid the general work of the Mission in a very remarkable fashion. I cull the following paragraph from that first issue: 'We have a message to the people of New South Wales, voiced at first from the platform of the Mission,

and henceforth to be emphasized by the appeals of the pen. If this weekly sheet proves of no help to the people, it will soon sink into the limbo of defunct journalism. And it will deserve its fate. There is no room in Sydney for second-rate newspapers. The call of the hour is for pens of fire and hearts of a Christlike sympathy. We have no axes to grind. We are in antagonism with no existing broadsheet, neither do we crave any man's patronage. We shall attack, to the last limit of our strength, the evils of our social, commercial, political, and religious life. We shall try to be a messenger of comfort to the thousands of weary ones who will read our pages, and, above all, it shall be our yearning desire in every issue to prove true to the glorious aphorism that for sixteen years has been the fond rallying-cry of the workers of the Mission, "*A Living Christ for a dying world.*" "

Within a few months we were compelled to enlarge the sheet, and during these years we have sent forth between two and three million copies. Evangelism red-hot, and illustrated in actual work—such has been our motto in every issue. To-day probably the little paper is more popular than ever. In a remarkable manner it has created sympathy with our work, it has largely helped our finances, and has been a messenger of inspiration to thousands living in remote corners of the State.

PART III

XXIV

EVANGELISTIC VISITS TO EUROPE AND AMERICA

Three visits to homeland—Amongst the elect—British Conferences—Commercial crisis—‘A hippopotamus hide’—England responsive—Holiness Conventions—Friend of my boyhood—Forty-four thousand miles—Successful missions—A wonderful scene—‘One week with Jesus’—‘Let yourself loose.’

SINCE arriving in Australia in 1871 I have made three visits to the Homeland. In consequence of the incessant strain of the three years during which this Mission was being evolved, towards the end of 1886 my health suffered so seriously as to necessitate a halt. A voyage to England was urged by my medical advisers, and made possible by the generous action of friends at the suggestion of the Revs. J. H. Fletcher and J. Oram. During the Conference of 1887 the sum of £334 was handed to me, and a furnished house provided for my family. Troubled as I was at the time by this temporary health failure, I have since been led to see in it the finger of God. Had I persisted in my work I could not have lived many months. Nerves were in a state of tremor, I weighed but a little over nine stone, the day-and-night stress of the work was making an old man of me; but this action of the Conference altered all that.

After spending some weeks in New Zealand, I sailed round Cape Horn to Rio Janeiro, where I had much sympathetic communion with two missionaries of the M. E. Church. Making another call at Madeira, I landed in London on May 17. From that on until the following January, with Hull as my head quarters, I spent the months travelling among the scenes of my childhood, conducting occasional services, gathering in a few sheaves here and there, picking up information as to new methods of Christian work, and thus preparing for the wider work that awaited me on my return. On

June 21 I was present at Queen Victoria's Jubilee Celebrations in London. The same month I was privileged to take part in a Holiness Convention held in Wesley Chapel, Middlesbrough, the chapel from which I went out into the ministry. That week's experience will never be forgotten. Among the speakers were the Revs. Thomas Champness, I. E. Page, William Middleton, Thomas Cook, Edward Davidson, Dr. Wood, George Clegg, and, last, but not least, Joshua Dawson.

A week or two later a still greater privilege was mine in being able to attend and address the well-known Southport Convention. That saint of God, the Rev. W. H. Tindall, presided, and amongst the speakers were Hugh Price Hughes, Charles Garrett, Dr. E. E. Jenkins, Thomas Cook, Thomas Champness, Thomas Waugh, J. C. Greaves, James Chalmers, M.A., I. E. Page, G. Mackenzie Cobban, Dr. Wood, and others—a remarkable galaxy of great and good men. At the addresses I gave much interest was evoked because of references I made to soul-saving work in Sydney.

In July I attended the Conference, held that year in the new hall of the Central Mission in Manchester. John Walton, M.A., was President, and my father's old friend, David James Waller, Secretary. Though there in no representative capacity, I was welcomed by the Conference, and granted a seat on the platform. On the Sunday I heard the famous Dr. Alexander McLaren, Hugh Price Hughes, and F. L. Wiseman. One of the special treats of the Conference was Dr. Dallinger's famous lecture on 'Evolution.' At the Conference Holiness Meeting I spoke and sang, the other speakers being the Revs. E. E. Jenkins, D.D., Thomas Cook, W. H. Tindall, and T. D. Barnes, from Egypt. It was a great privilege to be on the platform with such men.

One of the most remarkable services I attended in England was at the then recently commenced West London Mission, in St. James's Hall. The vast building was packed. I sat by the side of my old college friend Hugh Price Hughes, and marvelled at his power in dealing with evangelical truth. At his request I gave an address, and conducted the after-meeting. What a scene was this—the numerous penitents being directed to the Crucified

by Mr. Hughes, W. H. Tindall, Percy W. Bunting (editor of the *Contemporary Review*), Bamford Slack (afterwards a Member of Parliament), and other well-known London Methodists! Thought I then—aye, and many a time since—let our leading men but keep on these lines, and Methodism is safe.

A very different set of circumstances led to my second visit to Europe. The C.M.M. had been at work for nine years. Its growth had been phenomenal. The Conference had put the Connexional stamp upon it, and God was honouring the work, in that every week numbers were being added to the church, when all at once the State was brought face to face with a disastrous commercial crisis. 'In the months of April and May of 1893,' according to Mr. Colwell's *History*, 'twelve banks temporarily suspended payment, involving the locking up of nearly ninety-eight millions pounds sterling. And during two years forty-three financial institutions closed their doors.' Owing to the over-sanguine decisions of the trustees, the Centenary Hall had been left to struggle with an enormous debt that now promised to crush the work. To raise money locally was impossible. Hence the Conference, yielding to the pressure of a feeling of panic, resolved that a minister should be sent to England to assist in raising a fund of £10,000 to relieve the Trust; and to my discomfiture, and in face of my earnest protest, I was voted to this forlorn hope. At first I resented the decision, but, after much prayer, felt it my duty once more to face an almost impossible task. The venerable Dr. George Brown had just returned from a visit to the Old Country, and brought news of commercial depression in Europe. 'Taylor,' said he, 'I pity you. You will need to have the hide of a hippopotamus to carry through your programme.' This is not the place in which to give details of those two years of earnest and at times of despairing effort. I soon found out that to go through England with a collecting-book in my hand was to court dismal failure. I was simply driven to prayer. Dr. Brown had prophesied that I should find English circuits closed to me. Probably such would have been the case had I simply gone as a beggar. On arrival, however, I issued a circular, well credentialled by such names as those of the President of

our Conference, His Excellency the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Premier, the Mayor of Sydney, the heads of the Churches, and others. In it I offered to visit the circuits to conduct evangelistic missions, paying all my own expenses, only asking in return that at the end of each mission I be allowed to deliver an illustrated address on the work of the Sydney C.M.M., and make an appeal for financial help. This opened England to me.

Fortunately I had been appointed representative of the New South Wales Conference to the Wesleyan Conference at Cardiff. It so happened that there were but few speakers at that year's open session. I was introduced to the Conference by Dr. Waller and welcomed by Dr. Pope, and was given the place of honour on the programme. Before rising, Dr. Waller whispered to me, 'Speak as long as you like.' I did not have a good time. It was never my rôle to feel at ease in addressing so many grave and venerable dignitaries of the Church. Still, I got through, and, after giving the greetings of Australia, and furnishing details of Methodism's progress under the Southern Cross, I told the story of our C.M.M. work, and asked for their sympathy in my work amongst them. The next day my engagements-book was filled for many weeks ahead.

A curious thing happened that day that greatly brightened my prospects. Walking along one of the streets of Cardiff, a gentleman accosted me, 'Excuse me, but are you the minister from Australia who addressed the Conference last night?'

'Yes.'

'Are you a Yorkshire man?'

'Yes.'

'Do you know a place called Stokesley?'

I began to feel interested, and answered, 'I rather think I do!'

'Well, well,' answered my questioner, 'I thought I was right. Then you must be my old schoolmate Billy Taylor, who was converted in the old chapel at Stokesley. I'm———. You may remember I was converted about the same time. You are a minister in Australia, and I am a merchant in Yorkshire.'

In response to his pressing invitation I spent some

days with him at Harrogate. The assistance he gave me in my work was great indeed. At his own cost he printed all the literature I required for a fourteen-months' campaign, including illustrated handbills, pamphlets, &c. He presided at my lectures in various parts of the country, in every case putting a heavy cheque upon the collection-plate, and made the arrangements and paid the expenses of one or two of the best missions I was privileged to conduct.

How I worked, to be sure, during those months in England! They tell me I established an English record in that I conducted mission services right through their summer months. As previously stated, I engaged one of our old Sydney converts—'Whitechapel George'—as my helper. He conducted open-air services, meetings in factories, and manipulated my electric lantern. Our method of procedure was as follows: We would arrive at a town on Saturday afternoon; meet the church workers that night, conduct three or four services on Sunday; Bible-readings, factory-meetings, evangelistic services for three or four weekdays, then one or two lectures, generally totalling fourteen meetings per week, and then away to the next place, probably scores of miles away, on Saturday morning. I kept a careful record of the work done in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. The following summary will probably prove of interest to readers of these pages:

Miles travelled	44,250
Sermons, Lectures, &c... ..	636
Money collected towards my fund	£3,905
Number of persons who professed conversion	2,208
Evangelistic Missions conducted	51

To this day I wonder how I stood the incessant strain, and can only explain it on the ground that literally and fully the divine promise was fulfilled, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.'

It would be interesting to furnish details of the various missions held, but that is impossible. The following illustrative facts must suffice:

Strangely enough, the town upon which but little impression was made was Stokesley, the place where as

a lad I was converted. I found the church cold and formal. Still, between twenty and thirty yielded to God's call, amongst them being the daughter of my old Sunday-school teacher and her husband.

I preached one Sunday at St. James's Hall, in the morning for Mark Guy Pearse, and at night for Hugh Price Hughes. The evening after-meeting was a time of unusual power. What to me was a very gratifying scene was witnessed at the conclusion of the morning service. My name had appeared in the London newspapers as Sunday's preacher at St. James's Hall, the result being that for some time after the morning service I had to hold what the Rev. W. H. Tindall called a 'levee.' Fifty or sixty persons who at one time or another had been associated with our work in Sydney, and who were now in London, had seen the announcement, and came, in some cases long distances, to again grip the hand of 'the old super.' To me it was a very real and encouraging illustration of the far-reaching influence of the Sydney Central Mission. Three thousand people were present at the evening service. The after-meeting was a time of peculiar fervour and blessing, over twenty persons, mostly young men, coming forward as seekers.

At Elswick Road, Newcastle, a gracious work broke out. On the Sunday morning I took the entire congregation, including their splendid choir, with me into the streets. The sight of several hundred well-dressed people singing the gospel at the various street corners moved the district. Amongst the converts was mine host, a popular commercial traveller, who had wandered from God. In all about ninety professed conversion.

At Sydenham the work at first hung fire. The minister—dear Joseph Rhodes, the Conference Precentor—was much perturbed. But in a marvellous manner prayer was answered, and in the three days fifty-three persons came forward as seekers.

A wonderful scene was witnessed at one of our services in the old Yorkshire town of Beverley, to which I beg leave to refer at some length. The mission continued for ten days. Night after night the power of God was present to heal. Interest deepened as the work proceeded. On the first Sunday afternoon 800 men were present. At

the second Sunday-afternoon's men's meeting Wesley Chapel was crowded, whilst at night every inch of space was occupied—pulpit steps, aisles, window-sills all being filled with people. Right in the middle of that service a man rose up in the centre of the church and called out, 'Sir, I want to ask you a question.' Instantly there was commotion in every part of the crowded building. I afterwards learnt that the man was a notorious infidel, well-known through the East Riding as a working-men's leader, and possessed of immense influence amongst his own class. His denunciations of Christianity were generally such that the Christian folk in the church naturally expected a scene; and truly they got what they expected. Instantly I stopped my address, and asked him to state his question. 'You don't know me, sir, but everybody in this place and in this town does. I was present last Sunday and heard your address on "Jesus, the Working Carpenter." I came again at night. Every night this week I have sat away back yonder. I heard your address this afternoon on "Why Men are not Christians." Now, sir, I want you to forget that you are a parson. Don't bother about these people. For God's sake (if there be a God) answer me. You don't know how much depends upon what you say. Do you honestly, without any mental reserve, from your very soul, believe what you have been telling these people?' I need scarcely state the character of my answer. While I spoke the man stood with his eyes fixed upon me, and the feeling of tension upon the congregation was almost painful. With a strange sigh, the man lifted himself up and said, 'Sir, I believe you. Now tell me, can I become a Christian this night? What I have passed through this week cannot be told. I know what my mates will say. But my mind is made up. I believe in Jesus Christ. Think you I can find Him as my Saviour before I leave this chapel? I am willing to do anything you ask of me.' 'Do you mean that?' I instantly cried. 'Then leave your pew, and before these people come as a penitent to these communion-rails.' At once he pushed past his wife. The dear little woman was a Christian, and had been praying for her husband for years; and now that her prayers were about to be answered she almost became hysterical.

I cannot describe the scene that followed. The chapel

became a Bochim ; people were everywhere in tears. The front of the church was soon crowded with penitents. We continued in prayer until late that night. The man was in an agony ; beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead. All at once he jumped to his feet, and, throwing up his hands, he cried out, ' I've got it ; oh, thank God, I've got it ! ' In a moment he was at rest.

He was foreman at a shipbuilding yard, with 300 men under him. For the most part they were men of his own choosing—a wicked, godless set. He told me afterwards that early on Monday morning the devil sorely tempted him. ' Every man on the job will know what you have done,' he seemed to suggest, ' You'll get a hot time of it ; better stop in bed with a headache.'

' What did you do ? ' I asked.

' At first I was troubled, but at last I pulled myself together and said, " Bill, when you served the devil you were afraid of nobody. Are you going to be a coward now that you have become a Christian ? " And,' said he, ' I jumped out of bed, was down at the yard gates before the first man appeared, and as they came along, one by one, I got first word in : " Tom, I've become a Christian " ; " Jack, last night I gave my heart to God," and so on.'

' And what did they say to you ? '

' Sir, not a man of them jeered. Some said, " Glad to hear it, boss " ; others, " Right, sir ; you did right." '

Two nights afterwards I was wending my way to the closing service of the mission, when I saw a crowd in the market-place. Going near, I found it was this man Warren, telling his fellow townsmen what he had done.

Next day I left for a mission in another part of England. But the following week I received a letter from the Beverley minister. ' You will be interested,' he said ' to learn that Warren occupied your place on Sunday afternoon, and gave an address to a crowded congregation of men. And what do you think was his subject ? " One week with Jesus Christ." '

Several months afterwards I paid a passing visit to Beverley, and found that he was hard at work for his new Master. They told me that the atmosphere of the shipbuilding yard was all altered. He had set going a dinner-hour service for the men. It was my peculiar privilege to speak

at one of these. He had also induced the ministers of the town to form themselves into a brotherhood for the purpose of aggressive Christian work. During that second visit Warren confessed to me that he had had one painful fall.

‘Tell me about it,’ I said to him.

‘Well, this is how it happened. We were busy laying the keel of a new trawler. One of the men made a stupid mistake that meant serious trouble. In the heat of the moment my old habit took possession of me, and before I knew what I was doing I cursed him.’

‘And what happened?’

‘Why,’ said he, ‘the men looked as if a bolt from the blue had struck them. I instantly saw what I had done, and was in sore distress.’

‘Tell me, what did you do?’

‘Oh, sir, it was hard work, but I turned to the men and said, “Look here, fellows, I’ve done wrong; forgive me.” But I felt that was not enough, and so I threw myself upon my knees, right there amongst the men, and in the middle of the work, and cried to God to forgive me. After that it was all right, and I’ve never been so tempted again.’

On my last visit to England, eighteen years afterwards, no hand gripped me more vigorously in any part of the Homeland than did his. I found him well established in a business of his own, an earnest Christian worker and a local preacher in a Lincolnshire circuit. That one conversion more than repaid me for all the toil of those two years. At that same mission another notoriously wicked man was brought to God. He had been twenty-six times before the local magistrates, and was the despair of the place.

At Tennyson Street, Nottingham, where I commenced the work with much fear and trembling, we had a most blessed outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the seven days between 160 and 170 persons professed conversion. To me the feature of the meeting was a remarkable work that broke out amongst a lot of wild lads from the factory district, who evidently came to get what fun they could out of the meetings. At first I was perturbed; but we went to prayer, and ere the meeting closed their leader was broken down, and came right out as a seeker. The next night a number of others followed. Years afterwards I

heard from the leader of that gang. He became a local preacher, and for some years was engaged as a Home Missionary, being made a spiritual blessing unto many.

One of our biggest conflicts, and yet one of our most pronounced victories, was witnessed in connexion with a week's mission in the beautiful—and shall I say aristocratic—Jesmond Church, Newcastle. A very wealthy and influential congregation worships in that church. For some reason or other the place had the reputation of being hard to move. They told me that one of the Connexional Evangelists—either Thomas Cook or Thomas Waugh—closed a mission he was conducting in the middle of the first week. Beyond doubt, at the first I did find it hard. Those rich Methodists—how difficult it seemed to get at them! But in faith we pegged away. On Tuesday I received a remarkable letter from young Mr. Runciman, who in the last Government held an important portfolio in the British Cabinet. Said he, 'I have been at your services at Jesmond. Somehow I cannot get away from the feeling that you are holding yourself back. What Jesmond needs is the old gospel served up hot. Pray let yourself loose upon the congregation—let yourself loose.' It was just 'the word in season' that was needed. I did let myself 'loose upon the people,' and put all I had into succeeding appeals. We did not have a large number of converts, but among the forty who professed salvation were a number of the sons of our people, fine intelligent fellows, just such as one loves to see taking a stand for God.

XXV

EVANGELISTIC VISITS TO EUROPE AND AMERICA (Continued)

Three classes of Methodists—Gracious outpourings—‘No chance of a revival in August’—A hundred and seventy-four converts in four days—‘A move is bound to come’—America—A hundred and forty converts at one service—Two severe ordeals—New York preachers’ meeting—Bishop Vincent—An awkward predicament—Remarkable convention at Buffalo—Bishop McCabe—Five hundred dollars for one address—At Jerry McCauley’s Mission—A tempting offer—Dr. Cadman—Offer of D.D.—Again in England—At three Conferences and two Conventions—‘What are your expenses?’—Fruitful services—Farewell to Old England—Changed Methodist atmosphere—‘A slump in evangelism’—‘Methodism needs a good shaking’—‘It will come.’

No man of ordinary intelligence could, for fourteen months enjoy the peculiar privilege that was mine during this, my second visit to the Homeland, without being in a position to gauge with fair accuracy the spiritual atmosphere of our Church. Entertained in the best of homes, with free access to our parsonages, and in constant touch with the people in almost every district, I was able to form, I think, a fair judgement of the character of the inner life of the Church. Rightly or wrongly, it seemed to me that British Methodism could be fairly divided into three groups. First, and, fortunately, a small group of clerics and of laymen of what has been wrongly called ‘The Advanced School,’ who have little in common with the spirit and purpose of early Methodism, whose views of evangelical truth are—to put it mildly—peculiar, with whom evangelism is at a discount, and the evangelist is unwelcome. Their theology has a peculiar Germanic flavour about it, and, though intellectual and cultured to a degree, is yet a far remove from the thought and the propaganda of the earlier days of our Church. Then comes a larger group, represented by those who love Methodism, enjoy its ordinances, and take a deep

interest in its material advancement, but who care not for the class or prayer-meeting ; and, although they do not oppose, give but a quasi-approval of all aggressive revival effort. A peculiar idiosyncrasy of many in this group is seen in their enthusiastic support of the Foreign Mission policy of our Church, which, if anything at all, is certainly a policy of world-conquest, whilst, as I have mentioned, that enthusiasm is lacking when local evangelistic efforts are suggested. The last, and by far—by very far—the largest group consists of the main body of our people, alike in pulpit and in pew, who are restless about existing conditions ; who, like the godly few in Ezekiel's day, sigh because of the Church's weakness, and long for the return of days of evangelical fervour, with the consequent restoration of the propaganda and the spirit of earlier days. Of course, I am an evangelist, and look at things from my own standpoint ; still, I think I have gauged with fair accuracy the spirit of our Church in the Homeland as I found it in the nineties. Personally I was everywhere warmly welcomed by the majority of our people, and afforded every opportunity of proclaiming our glorious evangel on what some are pleased to call 'old-fashioned lines.' I have already given illustrations of this ; let me add a little to the list.

An especially cordial welcome was accorded to me in the city of York. Invited to preach special sermons in the historic Centenary Chapel on a certain Sunday, so remarkable a visitation of the Spirit of God was granted us—between twenty and thirty professing conversion—that arrangements were at once made for a special mission. During the ten days we saw a gracious work of God ; great crowds attended, some 130 persons came out as seekers, and the whole church experienced a blessed quickening.

During four days at Buxton Road, Huddersfield, a wonderful blessing attended the meetings, eighty-five penitents seeking the Lord. On the Sunday night an indescribable scene was witnessed. The officials of the church were everywhere busy pointing anxious souls to the Saviour of sinners, the register giving the names of fifty persons who at that service professed salvation.

Time would fail to tell of the work at Sunderland, where between 90 and 100 sought the Lord ; at 'The Mint,'

Exeter, where we experienced a great victory, over 120 professing conversion; at the Manchester Mission, thirty persons coming forward at the afternoon meeting in the Central Hall, and twenty-three in the Free Trade Hall at night (at the latter place I believe that hundreds were under conviction); at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where fifty converts were registered; at Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, Ripon and Cottingham, Durham and Pembroke Dock, Bridlington and Harrogate, Yarmouth and Colchester, Mildmay Park (London) and Newark, in most of which places many were brought to God. Right in the middle of the holiday season—on July 22—when the place was full of visitors, twenty-two persons sought the Lord at a Sunday-night service at Saltburn-by-the-Sea. This service gave me special joy, as it was at Saltburn—then little more than a fishing-village—that I had done much of my ‘prentice preaching.’ At a similar service in Newport (Monmouth) a wonderful work of God was witnessed, the influence of which is felt to this day. An attack of illness interfered with the work in Glasgow, but twenty-six professed conversion at the one service held.

But the most remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit I was permitted to witness during this visit was at Lodge Lane, Liverpool. Invited to conduct a series of services, I offered the dates August 26 to 29. The reply came, ‘No chance of success for a mission in August.’ As, however, every other date was filled, and I was about to leave England in September, the officials ultimately accepted my dates, but with much fear and trembling. ‘We never think of missions in the middle of summer; however, we will do our best.’ And they did. Such members of the congregation as were not away at the seaside rallied up splendidly. From beginning to end the place seemed shaken by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. I am not able to describe the scenes we witnessed. On the Sunday night seventy-six persons came forward as seekers. On Monday twenty-eight, Tuesday thirty, Wednesday forty, a glorious total of 174 in four days. Throughout it was a veritable Pentecost, for which I shall never cease to praise God.

In Ireland I was permitted to conduct four series of services—at Sandy Row and Donegall Square, Belfast, at

George's Hall, Dublin, and at Enniskillen, 231 persons entering the inquiry-rooms and professing conversion. At Enniskillen we had a great fight. All through the week the enemy seemed to be busy. True, we had a few conversions each evening, but everything was hard. I must have shown my concern, for the best of the people sought to hearten me. 'Cheer up! You don't know the Enniskillen folk. We shall have a great move before the mission closes.' And truly there was a 'move.' The chapel was crowded on the Sunday night. I had scarcely made my appeal ere one of the leading ladies of the town pressed forward into the inquiry-room. She was followed by others, who came from every part of the building. Soon the great schoolroom was filled with workers and penitents; some relatives of my old friend the Bishop of Bendigo being amongst them, as were numerous other well-known people of the district. When the meeting finally closed it was found that the names of sixty-two persons had that night been registered.

During these months I made Hull my head quarters, staying with my brother and his lovely family. On the eve of my departure for America I was asked to preach a farewell sermon in our Brunswick Chapel. A great crowd assembled, and the power of God simply took charge of the place, fifty persons being brought to God. My last service in England was at Lodge Lane, Liverpool, where I met the new converts for an hour in the afternoon on our way from the railway-station to the wharf on the day I sailed for New York.

What those months meant to me will never be known. So full of hard toil, and yet so remarkably owned of God! To Him alone I ascribe the glory.

Of the three months' incessant work that followed in Canada and the United States I cannot speak in detail. Whilst in Liverpool I was introduced to a son-in-law of William Arthur (the author of *The Tongue of Fire*) and one of America's leading Methodist laymen. In New York the name of Anderson Fowler was indeed one to conjure with. He became a warm friend and an enthusiastic supporter of my mission. At his beautiful home in New York I was entertained during the weeks I was at work in that city. I landed from the Cunard liner *Campania* on

Saturday, October 13, and that afternoon addressed a meeting of Jews in their church in Rivington Street. The next and following days I took numerous services in the Metropolitan Hall, 14th Street, the head quarters of the New York Methodist Mission. Then followed a memorable service in our largest New York church, 'Calvary,' in 129th Street, when some twenty-five persons confessed conversion; fruitful services at 61st Street Church, the Cornell Memorial Church, Trinity Church in 118th Street, and several other Methodist centres. The Lord gave me many souls at these places, as He did also at the Metropolitan Church, Washington; Sherbrooke Street Church, Montreal; the Dominion Church, Ottawa; and Grace Church, San Francisco. Gracious blessing was also given to us at the Metropolitan (Dr. Punshon's church), Toronto, at Buffalo, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Alleghany City, Chicago, Salt Lake City, and Colorado Springs.

At Trinity, New York, we were permitted to witness a quite unusual manifestation of God's power to save. On the Sunday the whole place was moved, and 140 persons gave in their names as having found Christ. Night after night the good work went on, until quite a large number made profession of Christ. It was a peculiar joy to me to direct penitents to Christ at the communion-rails in Washington at which America's great President Grant so often knelt, and at the Dominion Church, Ottawa, attended by so many leading Canadian politicians.

During my stay in the States I was called to pass through some—to me—severe ordeals. Never shall I forget an address I was unexpectedly asked to give to the most critical audience I have ever spoken to—the Monday-morning preachers' meeting in New York. I know of no meeting like it. There were two or three hundred parsons present. Dr. Mason North introduced me, and, to my surprise, and I may add discomfiture, I was called to the platform. How I got through that half-hour I know not. That morning I learnt the meaning of 'straight jacket' and 'stage fright' as never before. But I told my story, and that, together with Anderson Fowler's influence, opened America to me.

A still greater trial came through my innocent agreement

to speak at a meeting of 'The New York Methodist Social Union,' a very select and distinguished body formed from amongst our leading ministers and laymen. We met in one of the city's halls, and sat down to a banquet such as I have rarely seen. The guests of both sexes were in evening-dress. Several Bishops and Presiding Elders, together with Methodism's most popular preachers, and many a rich and cultured layman, sat at those tables. I was on the borderland of purgatory, inasmuch as, in a moment of weakness, I had promised to give an address. The only other speaker was that good and great man, Bishop Vincent of Chautauqua fame. The subject which we were both to speak on was that ever-pressing question, 'How to retain our intelligent young people in the Church.' The Bishop came first. He treated the subject from the broadest of broad standpoints, practically taking the same position as I had, just before leaving England, heard Dr. Dallinger express. 'We are too strict; we must relax our discipline, and give more latitude if we are to retain our young people.' Such in the main was the Bishop's viewpoint, and most humorously, lucidly, and eloquently he pressed home his points.

Now I had prepared with some care an address on exactly opposite lines. My three points were:

1. We shall never succeed in retaining and making the most of our young men and women by copying the alluring peculiarities of other Churches.

2. As no attractive ceremonialism can ever make our young people what we want them to be, so Methodism has little to gain and a great deal to lose by aiming at reaching them on the lines of mere intellectualism.

3. I have no sympathy with the tendency manifested in some centres to seek to retain our young people by the relaxing of our old-time discipline, and by making religion attractive at the expense of our Lord's teaching that touches in concrete form the cardinal facts of personal regeneration and practical consecration.

Then followed an appeal to stand by the old paths, and to proclaim as our one evangel the great truths born at Pentecost, and that through all the ages had made for the Church's progress. To this day I smile as I think of my temerity, but probably there was truth in both view-

points ; one spoke as an ecclesiastical statesman, the other as an evangelist.

During my work in New York I was asked to go to Buffalo to speak at a great Methodist Convention, whose delegates were gathered from every part of the United States, to discuss the question of 'The Church and Evangelical Methods.' I was to take the place of Dr. Mason North, who especially desired me simply to tell the story of the Sydney C.M.M. I may say that Dr. North and I had become the warmest of friends. He had heard my lecture on the work in Sydney, and, as I afterwards learned, backed out of the Buffalo programme chiefly to give me an opportunity to let the American delegates know what Australia was attempting. Nearly one thousand miles travelling for one address was a rather large order, but I have always been thankful for that Buffalo experience. On arrival I registered my name, and then went to see the wonders of Niagara, some twenty miles distant. Next day I addressed the Convention, and faced the ordeal with much trepidation. Here were hundreds of evangelistic experts, gathered from every part of this vast land, come expressly to discuss evangelistic problems of profound importance. I was an absolute stranger, unknown to a single delegate. When I rose to speak I was treated to many a curious glance. I had not prepared any address ; but with a slip of paper in my hand written in the train *en route* (it is before me at this writing), I was content to tell the story of the Sydney Mission. As that story gradually unfolded itself, curiosity gave place to interest, interest deepening into enthusiasm. Again and again I was not able to proceed for the applause that the simple record evoked. I could not understand the reason of such excitement until, at the end of a talk of nearly an hour, I sat down in a whirl of applause such as I have rarely witnessed, and good Bishop McCabe (better known as the famous chaplain of the Civil War) jumped to his feet and addressed the Convention. 'Here,' said he, 'is a truly remarkable thing. We have met from every part of America to talk about what the Church needs on evangelical lines, and here is an unknown brother, all the way from Australia, who tells us the very things we want to know. I propose that we give him a standing vote of thanks.' Amidst much

enthusiasm this was carried, and immediately afterwards the President—a rich merchant of Pittsburgh—left the chair and came to me. After complimenting me upon speaking the English language so well (what language *did* he imagine we Australians used?), he added, ‘Look here, if you’ll come right along to Pittsburgh and repeat that address, I’ll give you 500 dollars.’ Needless to say I went, glad to secure this help for my fund.

It was my privilege to preside and speak one never-to-be-forgotten Saturday night at Jerry McAuley’s Water Street Mission, the father and model of America’s many similar rescue missions. What wonderful testimonies did I listen to—devils transformed into men! Every fibre of my being was stirred; I simply revelled in the thought of the glorious old gospel’s power. That same night I addressed the inmates of the ‘Florence Mission for Lost Women,’ in the Bowery, a remarkable institution that costs its founder 12,000 dollars a year—money that was to have gone to a beloved daughter, Florrie, who had been called Home. It was nearly midnight when I left, after having knelt by the side of a number of New York’s ‘unfortunates,’ who were weeping their way to the feet of their Lord. The place was crowded with such. Jesus was indeed present with us in that memorable gathering.

I had been in New York about a month when I was invited to meet representatives of the Metropolitan Methodist Mission, carrying on its work in 14th Street. That work had been started through the influence of men like Mr. Fowler and Mr. Cornell, with a view to introducing into America the Forward Movement methods so successful in England. That well-known and successful evangelist Charles H. Yatman (whose evangelistic campaign in Australia is still so well spoken of) was engaged as missionary, and sent to London to study mission methods under Hugh Price Hughes. Somehow the work had not prospered; Mr. Yatman, though a great evangelist on his own lines, was scarcely the man for work of this special character. The committee had thought of inviting the Rev. F. L. Wiseman, of the Birmingham Mission, to assume command. Owing, I presume, to the success of the work in Sydney, they decided to invite me to settle in New York and become the superintendent of the mission. The offer was

a tempting one, including a stipend of \$5,000 dollars, with the usual allowances. I was to have a perfectly free hand, there would be 'no difficulty as to financial support,' &c. On my assuring them that it would be impossible for me to sever my connection with the work in Sydney, they made a second offer. 'Your collecting of money in America for the work in Sydney will never succeed. Will you give it up and stay with us for just one year to help us to get the mission properly established? We will pay the expenses of your wife and family to and fro, and give you the best of times during the year.' Naturally I felt honoured by the suggestion, but again replied that, much as I should love to meet their wishes, I could not be unfaithful to the special mission with which my friends in Sydney had entrusted me. They then asked me to advise respecting a young Englishman who at that time had charge of the suburban church of Yorkers, and was becoming very popular. The result of several interviews was that the young man was engaged, and at once made for himself a name in mission work. That young man was Mr.—now Dr.—Carlman, who has since achieved fame in America as an evangelical preacher, and is to-day known throughout the world as the famous preacher and pastor of a leading Congregational Church in Brooklyn.

Before leaving the Eastern States, Mr. Anderson Fowler sought further to do me honour by his offer to secure for me, from one of America's leading Universities, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. As may be supposed, this was respectfully declined. What had I come to warrant the acceptance of such a degree? I should for ever have felt uncomfortable under what to me would have been a burden. 'Dr. Taylor' would not fit in any way. Let it not be thought that in thus speaking I reflect upon honoured brethren who wear that distinction with so much of natural grace. There are those, many of them, who, by distinguished service as scholars, theologians, or men of affairs, have honestly won the right to hold the degree. Frankly, however, I venture the opinion that there are others who would have acted wisely to have taken a course similar to that I felt impelled to follow.

After an absence of seventeen years, for health reasons arrangements were made for a third visit to the dear

Homeland. In 1911, accompanied by my wife, I again left Australia for a year's travel, leaving the C.M.M. in the hands of my capable and beloved colleague, the Rev. P. J. Stephen. Hull was again my head quarters. My brother—now the mayor and chief magistrate of the city—and his wife gave us a royal welcome and the best of good times all through that happy year. We were free for the time from the responsibilities of the Central Mission, and at liberty to rest and for once indulge in the luxury of a real holiday. Much might be written of the time spent in trips to Scotland, the English Lakes, Devonshire, Cornwall, and other of the Old Country's charming centres ; but this is not the place for the record.

Of course, I was glad to avail myself of the opportunity—the last I should have—of preaching here and there in the dear old Homeland for my brethren. I have spoken of this as a rest journey ; perhaps that word needs qualifying. Together with Dr. Fitchett, I was appointed Australian representative to the Methodism of the Old Country. As such I attended and spoke at the Irish Conference, held in Belfast, the Mother Conference at Cardiff, and the Primitive Methodist Conference at Bradford. I especially enjoyed my stay in Belfast, was several times invited to speak, and preached on Conference Sunday at University Road and at Duncairn Gardens, at which place we saw many brought to God. I was charmed by what I saw of many of the Irish ministers. Some I met were intensely spiritual in their conversation and spirit, and seemed on fire for spiritual results to their work. As Australia's representative to the British Convention of Christian Endeavourers, held that year in my old town of Middlesbrough, I had the opportunity of again speaking in the place that had sent me out into the ministry. As representative of New South Wales to the English Annual Convention of the Y.M.C.A., held in Leeds, I met with many noble workers, and listened to some of England's greatest preachers.

Before leaving Australia I had been invited to preach the Centenary sermons at Guisborough-in-Cleveland, the town in which as a lad, nearly fifty years back, I had done some of my earliest preaching. The services were, to me at least, memorable. The gatherings were large, and the



LATEST PORTRAIT OF MR. AND MRS. TAYLOR.

results good, though, alas, I could not but feel that somehow Methodism had not made the most of its opportunities in that town.

Near to Guisborough is the village of Skelton, where, as previously mentioned, as a lad I spent much of my time and was helped on to my life's track. My Uncle Tom was then the leading spirit of the place; there I was wont to meet with Peter Mackenzie and Isaac Marsden, and with many of the revivalists of the old school. Here again I preached. But what a change! With a population four times as large, the congregation was smaller than that of half a century before. Still, the Lord gave me some souls, and I was glad of the opportunity of another visit to the dear old place.

During the summer we visited my native village of Knayton, where I preached to a handful of old folk, some of whom remembered my mother at the time of my birth.

During the Cardiff Conference I preached at several places. At New Tredegar a man cried out for salvation in the middle of the sermon. At Newport (Monmouth) I was invited to take a special week-night service. Here were many who remembered the blessed outpouring of the Holy Spirit at my visit of seventeen years previously. I simply cannot describe this service. Again and again I was stopped by the outcries of many in the church, and when at last I proposed to close they cried, 'No, no; go on.' I presume that this may be an ordinary experience amongst the Welsh; to me it was something as new as it was refreshing. At the end of the service I had an amusing experience. The office-bearers in full force met in the vestry to present the usual thanks, when the circuit-steward stepped forward and very courteously asked me what were my expenses. On my replying 'Twopence,' the good man blushed, and said, 'Mr. Taylor, what do you mean?' 'Simply this,' I replied. 'Conference has provided me with a home in Newport. It cost me a penny to get here, and I shall pay another penny to get back. Hence my expenses are twopence.' 'Oh, but,' said he, 'you are joking. All our ministers accept some fee for special work like this.' 'That may be,' I replied, 'but never in my life have I charged a fee for preaching, and am now too old to begin that sort of thing.'

I can only mention the blessed time we had at Mildmay

Park, London, where we spent some days as the guests of our old friends, the Rev. James and Mrs. Doran. At one memorable service there we had thirty penitents. The good work then started went on for some time after our visit. At the Central Hall in Birmingham, at Sheffield, at one or two places in Cornwall, and in the North of England we witnessed gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit. At the beautiful Leysian Mission Hall in London we saw much of the operations of that same blessed Spirit of God. I was greatly helped in preaching. A large number remained to the after-meeting, and sixty persons came forward as seekers of the Pearl of Great Price. A great work is being done in that centre. But my best harvest was reaped in my own town of Hull. At Brunswick, Kingston, Anlaby Road, Newlands, Thornton Hall, and elsewhere, we saw many souls won. My register gives the number as 108. Some of these services were seasons of remarkable power and blessing. It was easy to realize that the Holy Spirit was at work. A number of the conversions were of an unusual character.

Our 'farewell services' at Brunswick will never be forgotten. That fine old chapel was crowded to the doors. I preached, as my last English message, from the words 'Now is the day of salvation.' Soon the penitents began wending their way into the inquiry-room. Side by side knelt the Member of Parliament for Hull and the Mayor of the city, pointing the anxious to Christ. In all forty-four that night professed conversion. Next night, by request, I gave a farewell lecture. The audience was immense, packing the building, passages, and anterooms, and overflowing out into the street. The Right Hon. T. R. Ferens, M.P., was in the chair. It was a time the memory of which still lingers with me.

In saying farewell—for the last time—to the land of my birth, I hope I shall not be misunderstood if I venture to repeat here what upon more than one occasion during our English visit I ventured to say, through interviewers, in the columns of the *Methodist Recorder*, *The Times*, and elsewhere. Beyond doubt, between the years of my last two visits, 1893 and 1911, a marked change had taken place in what may be termed the Methodist atmosphere of the Old Country. It was a source of pain to me, as an

evangelist, to listen to the surprised remarks of many of our ministers when God gave the spirit of awakening at services I was privileged to conduct. 'Tell me,' said one, 'is this kind of thing common in Australia?' We never see it here now.' Said another, 'We have ceased to expect conversions under our preaching.' During the sessions of the Cardiff Conference one of our most distinguished ministers, himself a prominent evangelist and editor of an evangelical paper, said to me, 'There is a slump in evangelism in England just now.' Even Thomas Cook, that greatest of Methodist evangelists, deplored to me during our very happy stay at Cliff College what he spoke of as the changed atmosphere of the Church, attributable to the increased worldliness of our members, the lack of discipline, and the altered tone of the preaching in many of our pulpits.

'*A slump in evangelism!*' In that fact you have explained the repeated and painful decreases in the membership of the Church during recent years. Destroy the evangelistic note, and you kill Methodism. You may substitute what you like—wealth, culture, organization, a more attractive ritual, a more eloquent pulpit; yet let the evangelism of the olden days pass out, and before very long our great Church will be doomed to take a back seat. A great trust was committed to us by our founder, and, beyond him, by the Holy Ghost; we were called into being solely as a great evangelizing force. Failure here means disaster to our Church, and, beyond doubt, the raising up of some other body to carry on the work that we have, alas, in so many places been willing to let slip.

I have just been reading an article written by that sane and saintly Methodist divine, Samuel Chadwick. This is how he refers to the present need of our Church:

'Modern Methodism needs a good shaking. The prophets sleep while the vessel drifts. The ministers must tighten their belts and gird themselves for leadership. Addition must be by conversion. We must preach for conversions, work for conversions, pray for conversions, and organize for advance by aggressive evangelism. There is no other way in which Methodism can live and thrive.'

American Methodism, as voiced by one of its leading journals, *Zion's Herald*, thus endorses the position taken up by Mr. Chadwick:

‘Mr. Chadwick is wholly right. Methodism has lost its ideals. It is not living up to its inheritance and standards. Where is the minister burdened with the salvation of the unsaved about him? Where is the clergyman who is crying out of the depths with John Knox, “Give me Scotland or I die!”? We must be more with God and have more of God in us if we are to move men. We are mistakenly putting new methods, campaigns, and movements in the place of the Holy Spirit in its chief ministry of salvation. Indeed, Methodism needs a good shaking.’

I am now an old man. I love Methodism, especially the Methodism of England, deeply and ardently. And so naturally I tremble at what I feel to be the possible consequences of the crisis through which we are passing. Still, I am not pessimistic, but retain a strong conviction that by the operation of the law of necessity we will yet be driven back on to old lines—led to the old-time simplicity of faith, to a revival of the old and ever-successful methods, and so to the restoration of our great Church to its former whole-hearted fervour in the proclamation of evangelistic truth. *The Lord speed the day!*

XXVI

LATER SPHERES OF SERVICE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

A noble worker—City of the plains—Reconstruction projects—Elected President—A burning question—Methodist Union—Four times a tie—‘The Methodist Bishop’—Queensland Methodist Jubilee—Wonderful answer to prayer—First Australian class-meeting—‘Restore the fellowship of the Church’—An optimistic outlook.

Two breaks occurred in my superintendency of the Central Mission. The first was in 1888, when, upon returning from my first visit to England, it was found that the new Centenary Hall would not be ready for some months. The Conference therefore appointed me to the neighbouring circuit of William Street, the Rev. James A. Bowring continuing in charge of the Mission’s interests. Mr. Bowring rendered noble service during the two years he was in command. The Mission was without an adequate home, many of the workers were scattered, and the finances suffered greatly ; but this saintly man held on to his post, and it was largely through his industry and ability that when, in 1889, the Mission was launched on to a Connexional basis so many of the interests of the work had been conserved.

The year at William Street was a remarkable contrast from those spent at the Mission : a beautiful church with a depleted exchequer, many empty pews, and a heritage of trouble, of which nothing now need be said. A few loyal, devoted people stood by the work, and ere long the tide began to rise. I have just been referring to the records of that year. That prosperity came to us can be attributed to no one thing other than to the direct outpouring of the Holy Spirit. God honoured His Word, the people came to hear, and many were converted. The notebook of the time gives a record of very many who during that year

yielded to God, amongst them two of my own children. Once again we had demonstration of the fact that spiritual prosperity carries with it success on secondary lines. So long as that work of grace continued, the circuit stewards were happy men in that all financial demands of Circuit and Trust were met without recourse to special efforts.

In 1895, on returning from that two years of arduous toil in Europe and America, my health was so precarious that by medical advice the Conference a second time sent me into a circuit. Bathurst, the beautiful city of the plains, became for three happy years my appointed sphere. . . . Since writing the above sentences I have been busy on a sermon for next Sunday-morning's service at the Lyceum on the words, 'And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook'—a homily on the scope and limitations of Divine Providence. My appointment to Bathurst, as it seems to me, furnishes an illustration of the operation of this law as remarkable as the sending of the warrior-prophet from the King's court to the quiet brook in the ravine. True, I was not fed by ravens; but I was fed, and that was everything. If ever man had cause to trace the finger of God in his orderings, I had in this appointment. Yes, I had to work, for the circuit was large, and I had been charged with the chairmanship of the great Western District, and my nerves were queer, and my shoulders began to droop. But, oh, that climate and the responsiveness of those people! And what a horse was Charlie! And what a blessed work of God I was permitted to witness! Enough, surely, to rejuvenate old Time himself.

Compared with the incessant strain of the C.M.M., the combined work of Bathurst and the Western District was as child's play. I and mine revelled in the outdoor freshness and the indoor gladness. Much to the amusement of my wife, I must needs add to the ordinary circuit programme a scheme for repairing and altering most of the old churches in the circuit. What a zest that gave to things, to be sure! At one little place green mould had settled on the building, the roof leaked, bricks were dropping out of the walls; there was only one candlestick to light the place; a funereal pall rested upon the whole

concern. But a glorious revival came. Most of the people in the neighbourhood 'got religion.' The church had to be doubled in size, backs put to the forms, and lamps to the walls. One of my most highly-prized treasures this day is a large photographic group that hangs in my study, representing some sixty persons who in that gracious visitation were brought to God. The prophecy of Isa. xxxv. 1, 2 was again literally fulfilled.

Thus, month in, month out, the work of the Lord quietly advanced. In the city a gracious work broke out. My popular colleague, the Rev. C. E. James, and I were gladdened by crowded congregations, liberal offerings, by trust debt reduction schemes, and, best of all, by many being added to the church.

It is with peculiar gratitude I record an unusual case of conversion that occurred as the result of a visit I had paid to Bathurst in January of 1880. At the invitation of the Committee of the Y.M.C.A., I had been invited to conduct a series of revival services. The Anglican Bishop presided at one meeting, good old Dr. Geikie at another. All the churches were in it, and a gracious time of soul awakening was the result. When the mission was over, I was about to return to Sydney by the night mail, when the engine-driver invited me to ride with him on the engine. For me it was a unique experience. I soon found that the driver was in trouble of soul. He had attended the meetings of the mission, was deeply convinced of sin, but could not find his way to the Cross. On the footplate of that engine, as the mail-train was rushing onwards, with the full moon shining in an unclouded sky, I endeavoured to explain to him the way of life more fully. I shall never forget the moment when the light came. We were ascending the famous Blue Mountain Zig-zag. The place was ablaze with the glory of the moonshine. It was a glorious picture. In answer to a question, the driver, with his hand on the lever, not unmindful of his duty, cried out, 'I see it, oh, thank God, I see it! I accept Jesus Christ as mine.' When I came to the Bathurst Circuit sixteen years afterwards, I found this good man an office-bearer of the church and his family all warmly interested in Christian work. One of his sons has since entered the ranks of our ministry.

Our second year witnessed the coming of one of the crises of my life. For some years I knew it was approaching, and anticipated it with a feeling akin to fear. To some men the official honours of the Church are as the breath of their nostrils. Personally I have always suffered at their approach. During my first year in Bathurst my name was freely discussed for the chair of the next Conference. Quietly I sought to dissuade my friends from voting for me. Mentioning the matter to my old friend Dr. George Brown, I was pulled up short by the remark, 'Look here, Taylor, stop influencing men. The Presidency is like measles; it has got to come, and the sooner you get it over the better.'

In due course I was elected, and was called to face a strenuous year. The day after the election a touching incident occurred, one of the laymen proposing that as a mark of special honour my venerable father, who had a few years previously come to us from his old Yorkshire home, should have a seat provided for him on the floor of the house.

The burning question of those days was that of Methodist Union. Gradually it had evolved from the academic stage into that of practical politics. Party feeling ran high. Many of our strongest and best men lodged in opposite camps, and a great deal of oratory, and at times a good deal of feeling, was expended on both sides. This year the question reached a crucial stage, and a full-dress debate on the question 'To be or not to be' was the result. Hour after hour for two long, never-to-be-forgotten days arguments for and against waxed warm. The President was at the highest point of tension the whole time, and was kept busy settling knotty and involved points of order. Throughout the speeches were in the best spirit. None, even in the intense heat of the moment, forgot that he was a Christian and a gentleman. At last the vote was called for, and, amid a scene of breathless excitement, the Secretary declared a tie. A second vote was demanded, and tellers on each side were appointed. A second time the decision was given as a tie. Naturally on a question of such immense importance I hesitated to give a casting vote. To make certain of accuracy—for the first and only time to my knowledge—the

Conference decided to divide, *à la* the House of Commons. Confusion gave place to quiet, when the tellers a third time announced a tie. Some were still not satisfied, and a second movement was required by the second call for a division. Strangely enough, the result was still exactly the same; and the Conference awaited with bated breath the President's casting vote. At this distance the nature of that decision need not be given. Suffice it to say that general satisfaction was expressed, and a resolution adopted, committing the following question to the congregations, Trustees' and Quarterly Meetings, and District Synods, to be reported upon at the Conference of 1897: 'Are you in favour of the organic Union of the Methodist Churches being effected in New South Wales on the lines of the scheme herewith submitted?' Although the Union did not eventuate for several years afterwards, the result of the passing of the above was such as to render the Union not only desirable, but a necessity. One can afford nowadays to smile at the fears of many, as expressed in those debates. It is to be questioned whether a man could be found to-day ready to vote for the bringing back to us of the old order of things.

My year of office was an exceedingly busy one. Living at a distance of nearly 150 miles from the Connexional centre, much time had to be spent in railway-carriages. Will the time, by the way, never come when the Conferences of these States will release their Presidents from the humdrum weariness of presiding at the innumerable committee-meetings—big and little—that at present form so large a portion of our Church's machinery? Surely better work could be found for the chief pastor for the year than sitting—largely as a figurehead—at the committee-room table to manage debates and put resolutions!

Each year the President of the New South Wales Conference is expected to pay an official visit to a number of country circuits. This year I was led to decide upon a number of small and far-distant centres that had never seen the President. That round of pastoral visits was a great joy to me, and in several of them we were gladdened by gracious visitations of the Holy Spirit.

In one far-distant circuit the coming of the President was the occasion of a scene as pleasing as it was pathetic.

The Anglican Bishop had recently visited the district, and the town gave him a public reception. Why not the same for 'the Methodist Bishop'? Long rows of vehicles consequently awaited us outside the station. In procession we were driven round the town, and were 'received' in one of the halls of the place. Naturally the functions that followed were attended by crowds, and I am glad to report that at one of them penitents were seen weeping their way to the Cross.

At the Australasian General Conference held in Adelaide in 1894 it was resolved: 'That as the Jubilee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Queensland will be commemorated in 1897, this Conference resolves that the President of the General Conference and three other ministers be appointed to take part in the celebrations. The Queensland Conference to be empowered to invite the three ministerial representatives.' In due course the Revs. Dr. Fitchett, of Melbourne, Dr. Burgess, of Adelaide, and myself were appointed, who, together with the Rev. Dr. Morley, of New Zealand, President of the General Conference, comprised the visiting deputation. The meetings of that celebration were of historic character. In all the leading centres of that State great crowds gathered, and much enthusiasm was evoked. Probably I should have said little here of these celebrations were it not for a remarkable service held in Brisbane on the Jubilee Sunday, to which Dr. Fitchett referred at the great official meeting as 'the most satisfactory and remarkable feature of the celebrations.'

In brief the facts were as follows. Travelling overland by train, when we reached the city of Toowoomba the driver of our engine, a devoted local preacher, ran along the train asking for me. 'You are appointed,' said he, his face all begrimed with smoke, and his voice thrilled with excitement, 'you are appointed to preach to-morrow night in the West-end Church. Look out for wonderful things to happen. The people have been praying for fifty souls, and I believe they are going to get them. Anyway,' added he, 'I'm going down to-night' (the distance was 100 miles) 'on purpose to be present.' As may be supposed, I went to that service the subject of a good deal of nervous excitement. Try as I might, I



Crown Studios, Sydney.

MR. TAYLOR'S SOCIETY CLASS (IN PART).

NOTE.—This historic class was for many years known as the 'York Street Superintendent's Class.' It has probably met regularly since the days of the Rev. Samuel Leigh, who arrived in Sydney on August 10, 1815, and may thus lay claim to be the oldest 'Society Class' in the Southern World. Present membership, 140.

[*Face p. 314*]

simply could not prepare an evangelistic sermon. My theme was 'The Omnipotence of Faith; an Appeal to Christians.' The place was packed to the doors. The enlarged choir gave us of their best. From the singing of the first hymn one could have no doubt but that God was in the place. No words could ever describe that service. A strange awe settled upon the people. And when, at the end of my sermon, I called an after-meeting, scarcely a person moved. It was not necessary to make the usual appeal. Just an ordinary invitation, and from all parts of the church the people immediately pushed their way into the inquiry-rooms. What a busy, blessed hour was that! When, late that night, the Benediction had been pronounced, and wearied in body I sat down to learn the result, the Secretary brought his list of names, and *it was found that exactly fifty persons had made profession of faith in Christ as their Saviour*. Can any one wonder that a joyous outburst of triumph was heard in that church ere we separated? The influence of that service remained with that congregation for long afterwards.

Before closing this record of the years of my active ministry, I must refer to an incident that at the time greatly stirred my own soul, and that was followed, I believe, by much blessing, especially to certain of the younger ministers of our Conference. On March 6, 1812, about a dozen people met together on 'The Rocks,' Sydney, to form the first Methodist class-meeting in the Southern World. A century had passed, and it was decided, in connexion with the sittings of the Conference of 1912, in Sydney, to celebrate the event by the preaching of a Centenary sermon, the holding of an old-fashioned Love-feast, and a monster Conference meeting. During the previous year my wife and I had been in England. On arriving at Colombo on our return voyage, I found a letter awaiting me from the Secretary of the Centenary Celebrations Committee inviting me to preach the Centenary sermon.

There was perhaps something appropriate in the selection, inasmuch as for over a quarter of a century I had been, and indeed still am, the leader of what is believed to have been the class originally formed by those early pioneers. I was greatly helped in preparing my notes in the cabin

of our steamer, the *Orvieto*, and arrived in Sydney a little before the day fixed upon for the celebrations. The Conference adjourned for the service, the President and several of the ex-Presidents taking part. I took as my text a clause from Acts ii. 42, 'And they continued steadfastly . . . in fellowship'—an appeal to Methodist people to *restore the fellowship of the Church*. The attendance was large and responsive ; I was helped in the delivery of the message, and a gracious influence pervaded the place. By request the sermon was published in our Connexional organ and also in pamphlet form, and, I understand, was reprinted in the Adelaide *Commonwealth*, in a missionary journal in India, and another in South Africa.

Old man as I am, I am yet optimistic enough to believe that in some way known only to the Divine Spirit our Church in Australia will be led to bend its energies to give back to the class-meeting its old place of pride and power amongst us. We have suffered wofully, and are still suffering, through our failure to live up to the first principles of Apostolic teaching—aye, and to those that formed the very foundation upon which Methodism has been built up. We simply have to do again our first works, and the sooner we set about it the better, both for our own Church, and for the wider community that we are called upon to influence.

XXVII

QUIET DAYS

A mistake to be avoided—Retirement from active work—Conference resolutions—Ministerial Beulah-land—‘Don’t waste your pity’—Preachers’ sunshine—What a past!—Methodism suits down to the ground—Centenary Celebration Conventions—My seventieth birthday—In love with Jesus Christ—The Cross everything—A unique gathering—Centenary Day—‘What hath God wrought?’—Successful financial appeal—Fijian problems—Diamond Jubilee.

EARLY in my ministry I registered a vow that I would never fall into the error that I have known so many to commit, of continuing in any position of trust one day beyond the time when it could command my fullest energies. A man may easily outlive his usefulness. Many have pulled down in days of feebleness work that had taken them years of strength to build.

During my many years in the work of the C.M.M. there were times when it appeared to me that that day was approaching. At last the indications became so clear that it seemed as if I could hear the voice that had called me into the work clearly indicating that the time had now arrived for me to make room for other and younger labourers.

Towards the end of 1912, therefore, I indicated to the C.M.M. Committee my intention of retiring at the ensuing Conference. After certain protests and appeals the Committee assented on the understanding that I was still to continue upon the staff and render the Mission what assistance it was in my power to give. The Rev. P. J. Stephen had been my colleague for five happy years. He thoroughly understood the Mission, was one of our most distinguished preachers, and had been honoured beyond most as a successful winner of souls. He was to assume control, and I was happy in the thought of stepping down from the bridge and becoming second mate of the ship under such a chief.

The Conference agreed to my request to be made a supernumerary, and spent much time in words of lavish kindness. Though ill at the time, I was deeply moved by the all-too-flattering words that were spoken by so many of my old companions in service. By a unanimous and standing vote the following resolution was adopted:

'In regretfully acceding to the request of Rev. William George Taylor to become a supernumerary, the Conference places on record its high esteem of his forty-three years of distinguished ministry, during which he has preached the gospel with the force of earnest conviction and with passionate desire to save souls. His work has been signally owned in the conversion of sinners.

'Appointed to the depleted cause at York Street in 1884, he founded the first Central Mission, of which he was superintendent for twenty-nine years. The manifold evangelistic and philanthropic agencies of the Central Mission have commanded much public respect and support, and remain as a monument to his enterprise and devotion.

'Mr. Taylor has represented Australian Methodism and conducted missions in Great Britain and America with much success. The Conference is gratified to learn that Mr. Taylor's counsel and help will still be available to the authorities of the C.M.M., and it hopes that he may be spared for many years to render such aid as may be possible in this and other departments of the Church.'

An avalanche of letters reached me from various parts of the Commonwealth, and the newspapers contained numerous sympathetic but all-too-eulogistic references to my so-called 'retirement.' One article that appeared in the Melbourne *Spectator* touched me deeply. It was from the pen of an old member of the C.M.M. staff with whom it had been my privilege to enjoy much fellowship. It may savour of egotism to confess it, but I shall treasure to the end of life these tokens of confidence and of love.

And now, at last, I have reached my ministerial Beulah-land. I am this day, by-the-by, at cross-purposes with much of our Methodist nomenclature. Why did our fathers in the ministry persist in talking about ministers who had 'sat down,' or as being 'worn out,' and the like? I hate the term 'supernumerary,' for does not my

dictionary give its meaning as 'Exceeding the number necessary ; a person or thing beyond the stated number ' ? Look you here, you ministerial fledglings, I resent your implication that I am the extra apple that the benevolent greengrocer throws upon the scale as overweight. I am not an excrescence, an unnecessary outsider, the fifth wheel in the ecclesiastic coach.

I know I am approaching seventy-two, and you want to place me among the have-beens. But I refuse to be buried before I am dead. To-day I am very much alive. Of course, I am older than I was half a century ago ; still, I refuse to be called ' old.' As yet I am not out of my apprenticeship. Life, real life, is before me. ' The best is yet to be.'

And so, I pray you, waste not your pity upon such as I am this day. For a moment listen to my experience, and then tell me whether I—aye, and many others like me—are not rather to be envied than pitied. True, my sight is not as bright, and my hearing as keen, nor my power of endurance as marked, as in years gone by. But my food is as great a pleasure to me, I can ' sleep like a top,' my voice is as strong as it was in my youth, I have not a false tooth in my head, and require no stick to lean upon ; I can work in my vegetable garden and revel amidst my flowers ; my brains, thank God, do not play me false ; and, better than all, my heart still beats true.

And what a past mine has been ! It is over fifty-five years since I preached my first sermon. I was for forty-three in the ' active work '—aye, and am still in it. I have not laboured in vain, nor spent my strength for naught. In every sphere I have witnessed widespread revivals, have revelled in the affections of my people, have never had a quarrel either with my choir or my Quarterly Meeting, and have had possibly more than my share of brick-and-mortar work. True, I have never had an overplus of cash, but I have never gone to bed hungry ; a good deal of butter has been added to the promised bread and plenty of sweetness to the water. Forty-five years ago, like the Patriarch, ' with my pastoral crook I passed over this brook, but now I am spread into bands.' God has given me the very best of wives and a quiver full of healthy, happy, Christian children. As good Bishop

Hoss, of the M. E. Church South, quaintly put it to me the other day, our family may be counted thus: eight 'ordinary,' eleven 'extraordinary,' and six 'additional.'

And then, what about the richer, more blessed, and more permanent life of the soul? Eh, but I have had a good time! Religion has agreed with me; Methodism has suited me down to the ground; the finger of an unerring Providence has ordered my pathway. Were I to live my life over again, I would choose the same track, only I would seek to be more worthy of my high calling's glorious hope. And here I am to-day luxuriating upon the high tablelands of life. True, the sun is in the west; but when it sets, it will rise again. Meanwhile I have every opportunity for service, and enjoy every privilege that any ordinary man has a right to expect. Now, tell me, am I a fit subject for your pity and for the play of your sympathy? Rather am I not amongst those to be envied? It is for you who speak of me and of my kind as 'worn out,' and call me a 'supernumerary,' to give the answer.

I cannot do better than fill these remaining pages with extracts from my journal, that only lend emphasis to the above outburst of my joyous and grateful spirit:

'October 7, 1914.—In connexion with the celebration of the forthcoming Australian Methodist Centenary, at last Conference I suggested that the various districts of this State should be visited during the year by the President with a view to the holding of Conventions for the quickening of the spiritual life of our people. I was later on appointed to travel with the President, and have this day, by the mercy and the grace of God, completed a seventeen-weeks' journey among the churches. Have covered the following distances: By train, 2,858 miles; motor-car, 728 miles; horse traps, 510 miles; otherwise, 179 miles—a total of 4,250 miles; conducting 138 meetings; being an average of 250 miles and 8 meetings per week. Not so bad for a 'worn-out preacher'! Everywhere we have witnessed manifestations of God's presence and power. We have seen conversions at many services, and remarkable blessing at every Convention. At some of them Pentecostal power rested upon the gatherings.'

'January 18, 1915.—My seventieth birthday. With a deeply grateful heart I bow before my heavenly Father

this morning. Mine has been a life burdened with mercy and full of happy enjoyment. Coming from good Methodist stock, I have enjoyed a thousand privileges. Step by step I can trace the finger of God : in the parents He gave me ; in my conversion as a boy of twelve ; in my call into this ministry ; in my appointment to these Southern lands ; in my most happy marriage and in the children and grandchildren He has given us ; in my fifty-four years of preacher life ; in my being sent, although against my will, to " old York Street " thirty-one years ago, leading to the establishment of the Central Mission ; and in the very many spiritual children He has been pleased to give me.

' I stand this day, with absolute content, upon the Rock of Ages ! I revel in the fact of the Fatherhood of God, in the blessed power of the Atoning Blood, and in the richly abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

' I am in love with Jesus Christ. My horizon is broader, clearer than it has ever been. My ministerial life has been one ray of sunshine ; but this day the sun shines brighter than ever before. Yes, *this* is the sunny side of life. God is more real, the privilege of service more precious, the discipline of life better understood, the spiritual world much nearer, *the Cross everything* !

' My creed is narrower or briefer than it used to be ; but my experience of the unalterable verities is broader, deeper, truer. The thousand mysteries of life cease to worry me. "*He knows,*" and that is enough.

' Whatever of life still remains to me I give to *Him* without stint. Living or dying, I am the Lord's. "*Thou, O Christ, art all I want !*"'

I may add that on this day we welcomed a number of our oldest friends around our table. They included my old college friend and fellow voyager to Australia, the Rev. E. J. Rodd ; Mrs. Rodd, whose father's house was the first I entered in Australia ; the Rev. Dr. Sellors, who was one of those who, on board the *Patriarch* forty-four years ago this day, bade us welcome ; and the widow of the Rev. W. Fletcher, B.A., who was my first and only superintendent during the two years spent in Brisbane. A unique gathering !

' *August 10, 1915.*—To-day the Methodist churches

of Australasia celebrate the centenary of the arrival on these shores of the Rev. Samuel Leigh, the first Wesleyan missionary sent to the Southern World. Only one hundred years, and yet what marvels have been wrought ! At one time I had a lady in my class, an aged saint, who remembered standing by the side of her mother, Mrs. Bowden, to assist in giving welcome to the young missionary. I have in my class to-day one who remembers hearing Mr. Leigh address an English missionary meeting. We seem thus to shake hands with the beginning of things Methodistic so far as Australia is concerned.'

It will be of interest to the readers of these pages to ponder the following comparative statement, the story of our Church's progress under the Southern Cross.

	1815.	1915.
Ministers	1	1,183
Local Preachers	—	9,562
Church Members and Pro- bationers	19	174,094
Sunday Schools	—	4,260
Sunday School Teachers and Officers	—	24,984
Sunday School Scholars	—	233,282
Churches and other Buildings	—	6,253
Members and Adherents in Australia and New Zea- land only	80	630,970

'Naturally we are jubilant this day. Vast crowds have attended the celebrations. A Bishop from America, President Dawson from New Zealand, Dr. Fitchett from Melbourne, and Dr. Youngman from Queensland, together with the President and Secretary of our General Conference, with numerous other dignitaries, have come to share with us in our gladness. Eighteen hundred people listened to Dr. Fitchett's official sermon in the town-hall this afternoon ; 2,000 people sat down to tea ; and over 4,000 packed the hall at the evening's demonstration. The part, the only part, that some of us could take in these wonderful gatherings was to sing, and such singing I never again expect to hear upon earth.

'A peculiar part in these celebrations had been assigned to me. The Conference five years ago decided to raise a Centenary Thanksgiving Offering of £50,000, with which

to build colleges, aid existing educational institutions, and assist in furthering the interests of our Home and Foreign Missionary Agencies. Through the serious break-down in the health of the honoured brother who had been asked to undertake this task—the Rev. W. W. Rutledge—we approached Centenary Day some £15,000 short. At the request of the Celebrations Committee I was appointed special organizer with a view to securing this amount. Coming in at the end of a prolonged five-years' effort, and in face of enormous difficulties created by this dreadful world-war and the consequent innumerable appeals for patriotic funds, this appointment was made as a sort of forlorn hope. For several weeks I have been at it night and day, and am to-day full of hope that when the accounts are closed we shall not be far behind the required £50,000. At to-night's great meeting I made a strong appeal for £2,000. Many smiled, all were surprised, some were sceptical—but we got it.'

'Tuesday, September 21, 1915.—Returned this morning from an all-too-brief voyage to our historic mission-fields of Fiji. I went primarily to officiate at the marriage of my youngest son, William Arthur, with Miss Dorothy Brown, of Suva; but arrangements had been made by the Chairman of the District for me to spend some weeks visiting various centres of work in the group. Unfortunately, through a temporary attack of sickness, many engagements had to be cancelled. Still, during the time I was on Viti Levu I was able to visit Lautoka, Suva, the Rewa River, Davuilevu, and Nausori, and saw something of our remarkable missionary operations in these centres, both amongst the Fijians and Indians. It has been a time of surprises. The Doxology has been daily on my tongue. The Fijian group represents the finest type of missionary work of our Church. Within the life-history of one man the most ferocious cannibal tribes have been won for Christ. To-day there is not a heathen in the group. Nine-tenths of the natives are Methodists. I had the privilege of addressing a number of them at several never-to-be-forgotten meetings, and at two services had the thrilling experience of directing, through an interpreter, anxious souls to Christ.

'For years past I have longed for the opportunity of

demonstrating the power of the gospel to save men when presented through the disconcerting medium of another voice, another personality, and possibly another mental and spiritual atmosphere. I had read of the success of others, notably that of my old friend Thomas Cook, but was anxious to test it for myself. This visit gave me my opportunity.

At the Lower Rewa native church the missionary's daughter, a girl of twenty, acted as my interpreter. After singing to them I made an earnest appeal for decision. The great native building was packed from end to end; the entire congregation squatted on the ground, the various chiefs, according to their rank, sitting upon a raised dais. With what intense eagerness those people listened! When anything especially interested them they would call out, "Venaka, venaka" ("Good, good"). Soon a chief who had formerly been a member of the church, but had wandered far from God, under the deepest feeling, came right out from amongst his fellow chiefs, and fell on the floor in front of me. With the wife of the missionary as my interpreter, I probed him with questions, heard his confessions, gave him counsel, and ultimately had the joy of seeing him at peace with God; and yet all through we knew not one word of each other's language.

On the Sunday night, in the great Jubilee native church in Suva, a similar experience was granted me. This time six stalwart young natives from various parts of the group were brought under deep conviction for sin, and came right out as seekers. The Rev. A. J. Small conveyed my instructions to them, and all professed to enter into the joy of conscious salvation.

Fiji to-day presents problems that it will require all the sanctified wisdom of our mission authorities to solve. They include the perplexing question of the inrush of the Indian coolie, the desire of the Fijian for self-government, the spread of commercialism throughout the islands, the dangers to the natives from the introduction of strong drink, and the presence in the group of increasing numbers of non-Christian and often dissipated white people. But our missionaries are noble men, wholly devoted to their work—men who have an open eye and ear for "the signs of the times," and who recognize that their one work is

to spiritualize the forces of our Church in Fiji. With such men as these at the helm one can afford to be optimistic about the future of our work in these islands of the sea.'

'March 20, 1917.—DIAMOND JUBILEE.—Three-score of years ago this day I was, for the first time, taken into a Methodist class-meeting by my brother, and at that meeting [as has been told in an earlier chapter] was led to trust in Christ as my personal Saviour. That hour's work shaped and directed the entire course of my life. Can it be wondered at, therefore, that my love for the class-meeting has always been so intense? Again and again in these pages I have enlarged upon the unspeakable blessing to me of our class-meeting fellowship, which has in the past meant so much to our Church, and which, in one form or another, will, I fervently pray, continue in the far future to be the central spring of our Church's life. Methodism without fellowship would be an anachronism; but with it I know of nothing to prevent our continuing to be the leading evangelizing force of these Southern lands.

'In his able article on "Methodism" in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, our beloved Dr. Findlay has an illuminating paragraph on what one has called "this vital essence of Methodism." Here it is: "Methodism stands for Christian brotherhood. It honours the ministry and cherishes the two sacraments; but, in its view, the proof of church membership lies essentially not in observance of sacraments, nor in obedience to priests, nor in subscription to creeds, but in the fulfilling, on the part of Christ's brethren, of His law of love, *by their seeking one another's company and bearing one another's burdens.*" That is profoundly true to-day, and the sooner the entire Connexion sets to work to make our fellowship a real fellowship, the better! . . .

' . . . I have just returned from my class-meeting. As may be supposed, it was of a special character. About one hundred of my members and friends accepted my invitation to tea. Afterwards some two hundred others joined us at an informal meeting presided over by the Rev. S. J. Hoban, the present superintendent of the

Mission. Kindly words were spoken by ministers and laymen, and much time was given to praise and prayer. It was a remarkable gathering. Amongst those present were an old saint—a member of my class—just entering her hundred-and-second year, a local preacher who was on the plan with me in Middlesbrough fifty-five years ago, a minister whose father and I were local preachers together in those same days, our first street organist of the C.M.M. in 1884, the first evangelist of the C.M.M. Institute, and the first “Sister of the People” to enter our Sisters’ Home. I was profoundly touched by the kindly things said of my part in this great Mission’s work. Thank God, the dominant note of the meeting was that of a buoyant hope that the best days of the Mission are yet to come. I believe that to be true. Loyalty to the living Christ, the sounding forth of the evangelistic note, the fostering of an intense spiritual atmosphere within the Church, the enforcement of a wise and loving discipline, and what can hinder the marching forward of this C.M.M.—aye, and of widespread Methodism—in the fulfilment of its Mission to claim this world for our Lord and His Christ?’

XXVIII

LIFE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Putting down the pen—Moral reflections—Three great passages—
What grace has done for me—One purpose, one ambition—
Word of profound pity—Perfect satisfaction in *Him*—
Advertising Jesus Christ—An infidel's love for Jesus—Appeal
to young men—Get to know Him—Be content to proclaim His
blessed evangel—'I have not laboured in vain.'

January 26, 1917.—I am about to put down my pen, but cannot close these pages without indulging—after the style of the old-fashioned Methodist preachers, in whose biographies I have been wont to revel—in one or two moral reflections. I have just passed my seventy-second milestone, and am standing this day on the mountain-top borderland between two worlds. I know little of what awaits me on the other side. I am not anxious to know. So long as 'my Father is at the helm' I am more than content. It is the past that will keep rising before me this day. I am thinking of my younger days, and also of the very many fine young fellows now entering the ranks of the Christian ministry. Before closing these records I would fain add a word, that they may thereby be helped as I was in those far-away days of my early preacher life.

Three passages of Scripture this morning keep knocking at the door of my brain. They are retrospective and experimental, and seem to compress within themselves the guiding principles of my life.

1. '*By the grace of God I am what I am*' (1 Cor. xv. 10).
2. '*This one thing I do*' (Phil. iii. 13).
3. '*But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*' (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

1. That little word '*grace*' has fashioned and coloured my entire life. Explain it I cannot—a mysterious something, a little bit of the divine, that touched, lifted, transformed me, and has continued to be the dominating influence of all these years. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. I am certain that but for this divine grace my life would have been a failure. At the threshold of things it was the changed heart that gave to life its inspiration.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be

I recognize that debt this day, and desire to give absolutely all the glory for any success that may have been mine in this my life's work to *Him*. What have I that I have not received? 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' The work is His, the success is His, and the glory shall be laid at His feet.

2. Early in my life God put one thought, one purpose, one ambition, into my heart. This day I thank God in all humility that, though I have failed often, and there has been many a smudge upon the canvas, yet my purpose has never changed one iota. I never designed to become an evangelist. True, all my youthful longings tended in that direction, but I always felt that such an experience was beyond me. It was high, I could not attain to it. *It simply came*. I suppose I caught the atmosphere in which I had been reared. There was no intellectual resolve. My first convert just set me on the track from which, thank God, I have never deviated, nor ever wished to, through all these years of happy service.

This day I am full of profound pity, and not a little concern for those Christian ministers who speak slightly of the evangelistic gift. I have known theological students who have essayed to patronize men like unto myself as men of a lower order of thought. I have somehow managed to live through it all, and am more the evangelist to-day than I ever was. What else is there? Take the evangelistic gift from the apostles, and what is left? Can you imagine John Wesley without his marvellous evangelistic fervour? Eh, but it is passing strange that

in Methodism, that owes its very existence, its place and power among the comity of Churches, to evangelism pure and simple, there are to-day amongst us weak-winged fledglings who are as innocent of the evangelistic flavour and atmosphere as I am ignorant of the language spoken by the natives of Patagonia.

I thank God this day for this continuity of purpose. '*This one thing I do*' has been to me no meaningless boast. Early in life I saw the light that I have naturally and without effort followed, and shall continue to follow to my last moment.

Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb.

3. The one supreme fact that has had an overmastering influence upon my life is that of a passionate love for the personality of Jesus Christ. Pray do not ask me to explain. That can never be. I can fully enter into the spirit of Paul—'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. . . . That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.'

This love is not theological, idealistic, or hortatory, but personal, blessedly, realistically personal. As one has put it, '*I am in love with Jesus Christ*'! And so for fifty-eight years I have revelled in the privilege of preaching 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Let who will take their texts from the latest problem-novel or from the newspaper of the week, or their illustrations from Shakespeare or from Browning. As for me, the Cross absorbs me. I find here all I want, both as a believer and as a preacher. My mission through life has been to advertise Jesus Christ, to press His claims upon those who have listened to me. It is in no spirit of idle boasting that I write thus. My sermon-register is open for inspection.

I one day went into the house of a rich squatter, a man of keen intellect, but an avowed unbeliever. When being taken through his library I was astonished to find shelf after shelf filled with books relating to Jesus Christ. On

expressing my surprise, his wife replied, 'Here is a something I cannot explain. Though a free-thinker, my husband eagerly reads any book he can lay his hands upon that throws light upon the personality of our Lord.' The fact is that, though at cross-purposes with what is known as organized Christianity, the Christ charmed and thrilled him. Can you wonder at this? Even to read the Christ story is to fall in love with Him; what, then, is it to *know* Him—to take Him as Counsellor and King, to serve under His command, to sit at His feet, to imbibe His spirit?

My last word of appeal to such young preachers as have cared to read through these pages is this: At all costs get to know Jesus Christ. Drink into the Pauline spirit of complete surrender to *Him*. Think *His* thoughts. Breathe *His* atmosphere. Be content to proclaim *His* evangel. Thus will you reach life's highest ideal; and when you become an old man, as I am this day, you will be able to say, as, thank God, I am able to write down with joyous and confident emphasis, '*I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*'

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LATER NOTE.—'January 18, 1919.—How still true stands the ancient aphorism, "Man proposes, but God disposes"! I had completed arrangements for the publication of these pages, when the world was plunged into the agonies of world-warfare, and, willy-nilly, publication must needs be postponed.

'What a time of anxious waiting this has been! History furnishes no parallel. Throughout it all Australia has played a noble part. The best of our blood went to the front, and has no need to apologize, now that victory has crowned the Allies' efforts, for the part it took in the cataclysmic conflict. As everywhere, our church life has suffered more than can ever be told; but never has the loyalty of Methodism been more forcefully illustrated. I am proud of the part our Methodist boys have played throughout these dreadful years.

'My pen sadly drags this day as I am led to add a personal note. The last two have been years of deep sorrow in our little home at Lindfield. When preparing

to accompany me to my weekly class-meeting my precious wife was stricken with what developed into rheumatic fever; and for these two long years has had no use of either feet or hands. But what a sufferer! The grace of God has been illustrated and magnified in her through all these months in a fashion such as was seen in the case of Bella Cook, of New York, or of my own dear sister, of whom these pages have spoken. I am a richer, a better man this day for all the blessed communion of my wife's sick-room.

'During these years of stress and storm the Sydney C.M.M. has continued to forge its way full steam ahead. With a heart full of gratitude I would fain tell of years of progress. The vast congregations that assemble at the Lyceum Hall are as large, or even larger, than at any period of the Mission's history. My successor, the Rev. S. J. Hoban, continues to wield an influence in this city that is deep and widespread. In that hall men from the Universities, the schools, the Law Courts, sit side by side with "the man of the street" and the outcast, all glad to gather help from the words of strengthening uttered from that pulpit. And, best news of all, rarely, if ever, a week without the registration of converts. Mr. Hoban has made for himself a place in this city that it is hoped he will be spared to fill for a long period of years. Financially the Mission has prospered as never before. The superintendent and debt have nothing in common. With a sort of wizardry that is irresistible, "he asks and receives," so that the coffers are rarely empty, and the Committee, staff, and workers are freed from much of the burden that at times threatened to crush us during the formative years of the Mission's history.

'Thirty-five years ago the editor of our leading Sydney daily ventured a word of mild congratulation at "the temporary success" that "for the time being" had filled dear old York Street to the doors. "But," said the great journalist, "it cannot last; it will be a nine-days' wonder, and then pass away. York Street Church can never be successfully worked as an evangelistic centre." But this good man was not the first journalist to enter the ranks of the false prophets. Charles Wesley must surely have had some such illustration in his mind as that

furnished in later times by the C.M.M. when he penned those never-to-be-forgotten words :

'When He first the work begun
Small and feeble was His day ;
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way ;
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail ;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.'

APPENDIX

(See above, p. 20.)

I HAVE gone to some pains to secure a list of names of men who from the district of Cleveland have entered the ranks of the Methodist ministry. The result is remarkable, even though the list is by no means complete. I need only mention such names as : *Dr. Robert Newton*, Methodism's 'golden mouth,' four times President and nineteen times Secretary of the British Wesleyan Conference—one of our Church's greatest preachers and wisest counsellors, who, together with three brothers, 'remarkable for their talents and usefulness as ministers of the gospel' (Dr. Newton's *Biography*, by the Rev. T. Jackson, p. 5), entered the ministry from the village of Roxby; *Luke Tyerman*, Methodism's great historian—the friend of my father, and without whose advice at a critical period, as he was wont to say, he would probably never have entered the Methodist ministry; *Dr. Benjamin Gregory*, a native of Stokesley, President of the English Conference, a man of intense culture; *Francis A. West*, who found Christ in the same building as that in which years afterwards I was converted, Governor of the New Kingswood School, a man honoured by his Church and greatly beloved by all who knew him; *John Kershaw*, who rose to the high distinction of Connexional Book Steward; *David James Waller*, D.D., of whose mother's class my father was a member, and who from the smallest of beginnings rose to fill the offices, first of Secretary, and then of President of the Conference, and for many years shaped and guided the educational policy of our Church; *Thomas Cook*, probably the greatest winner of souls England has produced since the days of John Wesley, whose mother was my class-mate when Thomas was a lad; *Coverdale Smith*, that saint of God and winner of souls, the mightiest man in prayer I have ever known. And such laymen as *William Mewburn* (father-in-law of Sir R. W. Perks), who, when a boy, was my father's

playmate; *Thomas Brentnall*, my old class-leader and adviser, for so many years the leading man of the then young cause at Middlesbrough; *John Mease*, the apostle of Stokesley Methodism; and *Commissioner Railton*, a leading official of the Salvation Army, the trusted friend and adviser of General Booth, and who, when a young man, had offered himself as a candidate for our ministry.

Amongst worthy ministers still living who came out of this same favoured district are such men as the brothers *William* and *Richard Middleton*; *Edward Davidson* and *Vallance Cook*, both of them great as soul-winners, and who have rendered the Church distinguished service as Connexional Evangelists; *J. H. Rider*, a coming man of the English Conference; *Matthew Hall*, *George Osborne*, *W. G. Robinson*, — *Parkin*, — *Warren*, all doing excellent work in one or other of the Methodist Conferences; *Thomas Leech*, *Henry* and *Frederick Winson*, filling prominent positions in the M.E. Church of America; *George Hooper*, for many years Conference Evangelist of the United Methodist Church, and to-day a recognized pulpit power in London; *Edward Hutchinson*, a Redcar boy and fellow worker with Thomas and Vallance Cook, to-day a beloved minister of the Congregational Church in New South Wales; *Benjamin Bottomley*, keeping the flag flying in important Queensland circuits; and *John W. Burton*, for years one of our distinguished missionaries in Fiji, whose mother was my personal friend in the days when, as a lad, I was wont to preach at the village of Lazenby.

This is a remarkable record, and by no means a complete one, for the Methodist church in Cleveland has sent still many others to fill important spheres in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the various parts of the mission-fields operated by the Wesleyan and other Methodist Conferences.

It is worthy of mention that the late venerable and distinguished Rev. *George Brown*, D.D., F.G.S., President of the Methodist General Conference of Australia; the Rev. *Simpson Johnson*, Secretary and afterwards President of the English Wesleyan Conference; and the Rev. *Silvester Whitehead*, of China missionary fame and ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, narrowly missed being Clevelandites, having been born just beyond the border-line.

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